

Spring 1976

48840

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ODYSSEY

Jerry Pournelle's
Exciting New Novella
**BIND YOUR SONS
TO EXILE**

Award Winning Authors
In This Issue

Robert Bloch
Theodore Sturgeon
Robert Silverberg
Thomas Scortia



KELLY
FREAS

Frederik Pohl: PRISONER OF NEW YORK ISLAND
An Exclusive Interview with ZENNA HENDERSON



Because I have taken the mystery out of Transcendental Meditation...

TEACH YOU MASTER TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION A SINGLE EVENING...

In Your Own Home!

Why Pay Hundreds Of Dollars To Be Given
A Gift THAT ALREADY EXISTS, NATURALLY, RIGHT
NOW, INSIDE YOUR VERY BODY?

Let me make this point perfectly clear! There is nothing really new about Transcendental Meditation, and the amazing physical effects it brings! Transcendental Meditation actually goes back several thousand years, to the Ancient Seers of Tibet, China and India, who actually demonstrated that they could perform seemingly "impossible" feats when they let it protect them—such as literally walking over hot coals without being burned, or being buried alive for hours, and even dials, without the slightest harm!

These great mystics believed that the awesome power of Transcendental Meditation was buried deep in their body—and in the body of every living human being—waiting only the proper "key" to unlock it!

I, myself, first made contact with them over 15 years ago, on my trips to India and the Orient, after witnessing their incredible feats.

I was the first to introduce Transcendental Meditation to an American audience, in my Carnegie Hall lectures that same year. Even then, I taught the basic technique—the psychological and physiological side of Transcendental

Meditation—in just a few minutes! But I also believed (and still do) that these basic psychological and physiological benefits—vital as they undoubtedly are—were only the first beginning of what Transcendental Meditation can REALLY accomplish for you! And then you must go beyond them, as I show you below!

Meanwhile, However, I Have Seen People Waste
Hundreds Of Dollars Of Their Money, And Months
Of Their Time, TO GAIN WHAT I COULD GIVE
THEM IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES!

So I have now decided to take Transcendental Meditation—in fact, all the benefits these men and women could get in any course they could purchase for any amount of money, and "boil it down" into a brief Confidential Report so simple, so clear, and so immediately and apparently effective that they could master it, COMPLETELY, in just 5 life-transforming minutes!

This simple at-home technique completely does away with any belief that there is any mystery whatsoever in achieving the full power of Transcendental Meditation!

It proves to you immediately that, after you, you need neither "Gurus" nor "Masters" There is no need for you to leave your own home! That there are no long, involved courses to master. No high-paid instructors to dominate you! No \$125 paid before you receive the first lesson, and no further outlays for "follow-up" lessons!

And as for your private Master, once you send me your name, I will send you—FREE—a private Master for yourself alone, that will be useful to no one else in all the world! And you have this Free Private Master, then the ability to gain this deep relaxation, peace and overwhelming release from hypertension is yours already! Yours in your natural African heritage! What I have done for you is simply given you what I believe to be the simplest and most effective way to tap this natural gift.

So this is NOT an "esoteric," "mystic," or "maga" specialized technique, available only to the wealthy! It is, instead, a "universal path" that is accessible to *every* man!

You Will Realize, Right From The Start,
That You Are Doing The Right Things, BECAUSE
YOU WILL SEE THE IMMEDIATE RESULTS!

These will be so dramatically evident that you will instantly know you are on the right track! You will actually learn how to use Transcendental Meditation in only five minutes! And you will find out, in that short time alone, that there is absolutely no harmful effect—nor will you be startled by any strange symptoms from using this scientifically-proven form of Meditation!

In fact, you will be surprised to find it so uniquely simple, and with such immediate benefits that last forever in your life!

And One Last Pledge, That NO Other Form Of
Transcendental Meditation Can Make To You!

And that is this: That you may reach beyond the mere psychological and psychological benefits of this De-Mystified Transcendental Meditation... and actually release the higher creative power of your own mind! For example:

- 1) You will be shown how to achieve permanent peace of mind, tranquility and inner joy, with the "spontaneous" "inevitably" to outside stresses and strains!
- 2) You will learn to use Transcendental Meditation to overcome personal problems such as inferiority complex, self-consciousness and fear of inadequacy; and build instead a strong, self-reliant, magnetic personality!
- 3) Such personal tranquility, and improved powers of mind, may then be programmed to focus your higher mind centers on peace, confidence and success! That is, you can easily lead you to become wealthy through your career or business!

And, as an extra benefit of such heightened personal magnetism, a simple shift in the focus of your daily Meditations can give you great new strength and creative powers, new life in life!

Then, if you so choose, you may even develop the psychic powers that are latent within



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

NORVELL: For over 30 years his unprecedented thirst for spiritual fulfillment has taken him to the most remote corners of the globe—to finally become one of the few Westerners, in our time, who has ever gained acceptance as an equal among the Holy Masters of both India and Tibet! He has also mastered the scientific secrets of Western knowledge at America's most highly-regarded universities.

In America alone, over these past decades, tens of thousands have come to Carnegie Hall in New York, and dozens of other centers of public lecture to share in person his profound wisdom—that combines the Science of the West with the Mystic Knowledge of the East!

And now **NORVELL** reveals the greatest of his great secrets in this revolutionary new Confidential Report—how to master the full art of Transcendental Meditation... in your own home!

Your subconscious mind... and, prone to yourself that ESP, pre-cognition and the rest are as much actual facts, as mathematics or electricity!

AND ALL FULLY GUARANTEED... LIKE THIS:

If, after 30 days, you are *not* entirely convinced of the power of the De-Mystified Transcendental Meditation, return this report to me for every cent of your money back!

FREE PRIVATE MANTRA!

Based on your own name! Selected by Norvell himself, by his special Sanskrit system so that no one else in America has the same Mantra! No other system of Transcendental Meditation can make this claim! And it's yours to keep FREE, even if you return the Report itself!

MAIL NO RISK COUPON TODAY!

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380 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017

Confidential! Please give me a copy of "NORVELL'S 5-MINUTE DE-MYSTIFIED TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION" Confidential Report. I enclose \$9.98 in full payment. I understand that I may examine this Confidential Report for 30 days at your risk of money back.

I understand that my own Private Master, specially selected for me by Norvell, and mine absolutely FREE, even if I return the Report for every cent of my money back.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____

Send Encl. to: 380 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017

IN JUST FIVE MINUTES LEARNING TIME, YOU GET EVERY ONE OF THESE AMAZING HEALTH BENEFITS, JUST AS A START—

After just five short minutes, in your own home, simply by learning my new De-Mystified Transcendental Meditation, you will find what prominent scientists all over the United States have already discovered—that you can lower your blood pressure at will. And sometimes lower that blood pressure sharply after only a few minutes! Meditation may also be used to slow down or increase the rhythm of your heart, and control your pulse rate significantly. This is especially important if you have heart or circulatory problems. In fact, after only a few Meditations sessions, heart beat may actually *reverse* itself!

In such Meditations, metabolism may also normalize. This, in turn, not only helps ease the processes of digestion, gives you more nutrition from your food, but at the same time, controls the appetite and keeps the body from putting on excess weight!

Or, if you are now "hopelessly" overweight, Meditation may, at the same time, help you bring that weight back down, by not only controlling your appetite but by removing the psychological stresses that cause you to over-eat in the first place, or eat the wrong foods!

And Scientists Have Now Proven That:

Cigarette smoking, as well as alcoholism and even drug addiction, have, in case after case, been cured within two weeks, to one month without the aid of medication!

It was found that persons engaged in meditation could lower the oxygen consumption of the body in just a few minutes, sometimes as much as 50%. This is especially important if you now suffer from a heart or lung disease!

Men and women who suffer from deep melancholia, depression, anxiety and worry have repeatedly used Meditation to overcome these moods, and find peace!

Meditation is also being used, right now, in clinics in real hospitals, by many patients who had previously been considered to incurable that they had to be kept under heavy sedation or in comas!

Migraine headaches, caused by stress conditions, have often been *healed* in moments! And even these mysterious Transcendental Meditation scientists have apparently slowed down the aging process of the body itself... and have even demonstrated that such effects may enable you to live as much as 150 healthy years!

**MEN
WOMEN**

How to get rich in the MAIL ORDER World Trade Business

**B. L. MELLINGER, Famous
World Trader, Internationally
known Mail Order Expert.**

"I started in Mail Order a few years ago, part time in my garage. I had less than \$100. I discovered how to make Mail Order pay big. Today my business empire spans the globe... 1253 acres of land, office buildings, warehouses. My Plan lets you use my experience to make a fast start in your own big profit home business. I will personally help you start your own Mail Order success."

BUY BELOW WHOLESALE 24,221 IMPORTS

You get early news about over 24,000 new imports a year, to sell by mail. My foreign travels uncover newest imports. I show you how easy it is to deal direct with the supplier, cut out middlemen, keep all the profits.



START AT HOME the very day you receive my complete profit plan!

You get everything you need to start fast. Step-by-step I reveal how to pick mail order product winners, how to buy Below Wholesale for biggest profits, how to write and place ads that pull orders... everything! Thanks to my confidential Drop Ship Plan you need little or no capital. I find fabulous "first time offered" imports you can turn quickly into orders by mail. You deal direct with overseas suppliers, keep all the profit! Make your first Mail Order transaction 10 minutes after you open my Plan. Get into Mail Order now. Make big money fast. Start with my Plan.

SPARE TIME Money Making Opportunity

You need much more money today just to keep even with galloping inflation! Your own home Mail Order business can boost your family income, be a pleasurable way to use your leisure hours! Great for husband/wife teams, family projects. You'll thank your lucky stars for your Mail Order income when retirement comes.

INTERNATIONAL TRADERS HELPS YOU

You are never alone. My Plan includes full membership in International Traders... the world's only organization dedicated totally to helping ambitious men and women achieve a fast start in the Mail Order World Trade business. Regularly I meet with I.T. members at closed door Seminars across the country.

BUY ONE AT A TIME OR BUY IN QUANTITY

Many of these 24,221 imports you can buy one at a time... others you can order in quantity, with minimum total order as low as one Joke Necktie only \$ 3.95. Other examples... 100 Electronic razors only \$ 2.68 ea. or 26 for \$ 2.67 ea. One Wink Coat \$ 395 ea. Electronic tested Digital Watch \$7.75 ea. or 100 for \$0.95 ea. All these prices include duty & shipping. Cut out U.S. middlemen. Buy before who-else. Seal the International Traders' Way!

Read these Actual Reports of Mail Order Money Making

STANDARD FIRST MONTH

"First month's sales in new shop \$5008.00 including Power and Crystal - Norway, Jewelry - Austria, Home Aids - Italy, Pottery - Germany" *Lucy Ryan, MO*

TRUCK DRIVER TURNS WORLD TRADER
"I have given up my former profession of driving a truck and have gone into World Trade on a full time basis. Have sold 11,000 Mail-Box Scrapers." *W. H. Shurtz, CA*

CARS BUY GREGORY MELLINGER
"Can make 80% with auto advertising via chamber direct term contracts. I work with quality products. See honest results at all times. Melinger Plan goes far beyond home, new car, car cover" *Don Nelson, Canada*

FINES IMPORTING EASY

"I am greatly surprised at how easy it is to import. The products I have handled sell themselves!" *Paul Crockett, Indiana*

ST. CROCKETT IN FIRST 2 HOURS
"First two days sold 20 thousand needles. 10 perfume bottles. 8 jewelry orders. Profit \$389.70." *Paul Crockett, Indiana*

DISABLED VETERAN FINDS SUCCESS
"Since becoming an International Trader, I have gained 3 wheel chairs, a new medical bag, 10000 Tissues, 3 Musical clocks, needles and a new light bulb socket. No hospital on my home's bill in \$1540.00 to one company. I will learn home by letter and phone." *Edwin Arls, IL*

\$780.00 IN BANK AFTER 6 MONTHS
"Sold 22 country items weekly. Sold every week. Mailings after first few for 100% profit." *Judy Lichman, Canada*

UNEMPLOYED FINDS PROFITS
"I was Mailinger Plan sample and sales \$2900.00 100 profit. \$25,000.00 last week. Second day's sale \$500.00. 1 week Mailinger all profit for my success." *Russell J. Carter, VA*

"I can't promise everyone to do as well. But if you are able and willing to export, I'll help you gain your own total profit." *Gregory W. L. Mellinger*

FREE SAMPLE COUPON

The Mellinger Co., Dept. C1712
8100 Varlet Ave., Woodland Hills, CA 91364

Send Free Sample Import & Free Report, "How to Import/Export." Show how I can start a business of my own. I understand there is no obligation and no salesman will call.

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send 3 days - Give Zip for Fast Reply

IMPORTANT
Make today be the day you start and find out if you really want to start a business. I'll help you get the report to only one person. No more. If you are not interested, please send 24 hours or age or sex.
Initial Date _____



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A top-notch new column
by
Award-Winning
ROBERT SILVERBERG

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KELLY FREAS

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Amazing breakthrough in "Inner Body Exploration"...

DIAL YOUR DESTINY!

NOW, YOU CAN DIAL THE DAILY PEAKS AND VALLEYS OF YOUR INTELLECT.
YOUR EMOTIONS AND YOUR PHYSICAL STRENGTH... (BEFORE YOUR DAY BEGINS)

YOUR PERSONAL, PALM-SIZED BIO-COMPUTER CAN MAKE YOUR LIFE RICHER, FULLER, MORE SUCCESSFUL... IN EVERY WAY!

The difference between the rich and the poor... the strong and the weak... the plain and the beautiful... is timing! You've always "felt" that was true. Now, science has proven it!

World-famous researchers working at the Rockefeller Institute, Syracuse University and the Swiss Institute of Technology in Zurich have measured and charted the three great biological rhythms of man: the emotional, intellectual and physical cycles.

HUNDREDS OF SCIENTIFIC TEXTBOOKS SUPPORT THE CLINICAL EVIDENCE

You are a rhythmic, cyclical individual. We all are. This rhythmic quality was noted by Sigmund Freud nearly 50 years ago and research on biological rhythms has continued since then.

Some days you feel physically great, other days you don't. Some days are emotionally bright and sunny, others are dismal and depressed. Some days your mind feels "sharp as a razor" while other days you'd rather not think.

BIO-COMPUTER™ LETS YOU CHART YOUR BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS!

Body cycles have been measured to show consistency:

- Your Physical Cycle is 23 days
- Your Intellectual Cycle is 33 days
- Your Emotional Cycle is 28 days

Millions of bits of information have been computerized and programmed into a small—but precision-made—instrument—a BIO-COMPUTER.

For years, thousands of individuals have paid up to \$500.00 to have their personal biological rhythm chart created for just one year! Now, computer technology and miniaturization have made bio-rhythms available to everyone.

The result of hundreds of man-years of scientific research, the BIO-COMPUTER lets you calculate when your natural strengths and talents can best be used to your greatest advantage.

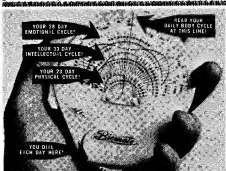
When will you be "wisest" in business? When will you be at your "physical peak" to make the most of your love life? When will your emotions be their most exuberant and rewarding?

YOUR NATURAL BIOLOGICAL RHYTHMS ARE NOW PREDICTABLE! BIO-COMPUTER LETS YOU CHART ANYONE'S FOR ANY DAY OF ANY YEAR! Personal needs, health and intellectual progress through your biological cycles with this ingenious product of research, computer technology and miniaturization!

THE WORLD'S MOST UNUSUAL GUARANTEE

We won't even cash your check or money order for 31 days after we've sent you the Bio-Computer. That'll give you plenty of time to get it, look it over, try it out.

If you don't agree that it's worth at least a hundred times what you invested, send it back. Your uncashed check or money order will be returned to you.

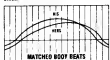
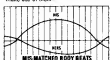


YOU CAN DIAL YOUR BIO-RHYTHMS, YOUR FAMILY'S... ANYONE'S IN MINUTES!

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE ENHANCED AT TIMES OF SYNCHRONIZED BODY BEATS!

Often this is the result of opposing biological rhythms in the two of you. Now, you can actually predict these times... and you can predict the periods of greatest sexual compatibility and make use of them!

Again, timing. Sometimes everything feels "just right" between you and your sexual partner. At other times the relationship seems to be lacking a compatibility—a real emotional and physical union.



HOW BIO-COMPUTER CAN ADD DOLLARS TO YOUR INCOME AND MAKE YOUR DOLLAR GO FURTHER!

When your intellectual cycle is at its peak, your decisions in business have a greater probability of being the right ones. That means success and financial reward!

That's also the time to make your major purchases: homes, cars and appliances. You'll be a better buyer because you'll be a wiser negotiator, and that'll mean extra money for you!

Try it for just a couple months and note your increased ability to spend your money wisely, save more and enjoy all the fruits of greater buying confidence.

CREATING "YOUR PERFECT BODY" IS EASIER... WHEN YOU DO IT AT "THE RIGHT TIME"

Ever notice how sometimes it's easier to lose weight, exercise and shape-up than at other times? Think about that physical cycle—when you're at your performance peak. That's the time to concentrate on beautifying your body because that's the time when all of your physical activity will pay the greatest rewards!

BIO-COMPUTER enables you to predict those periods of peak physical performance and make the most of them. There's never been an opportunity like this!

HOW DOCTORS, ATHLETES, PROFESSORS, BUSINESSMEN USE ADVANCE BIO-RHYTHM KNOWLEDGE

We would calculate the body rhythm of the patient to determine the best day for surgery.

Dr. Eugene Rircher, Physician/Surgeon

Being able to chart the bio-rhythms of team members has enabled me to offer my athletes better training schedules, which has resulted in their performances.

Jack Garthoff, Olympic Gymnastic Coach

My financial success is due in great part to my understanding of my Body Clock. Because I've peaked on good days—I got more done. Then I slacked off on bad days and didn't worry about it.

Alfred Morrisgide, Business Industrialist

Without my Bio-Computer telling me what I can expect of myself I think I would have cracked under the pressure.

Julia Halsman, Women's Review Writer

ASTOUND YOURSELF WITH THE AMAZING ACCURACY OF BIO-COMPUTER—OR RETURN WITHOUT OBLIGATION!

The only way the Bio-Computer can analyze and predict your personal bio-rhythms—the knowledge of which you can use to better your life in every way—is for you to invite the Bio-Computer into your home. Live with it. Use it. Calculate your bio-rhythmic cycles. Your children's. Your friends'. Even your business acquaintances. Write them all down.

If you don't agree that it's worth at least a hundred times what you invested, send it back. Your uncashed check or money order will be returned to you.

FREE BIO-COMPUTER™ 30 DAY TRIAL OFFER

BIO-COMPUTER P.O. Box 1185, Dept. CD-1, Melville, California 94561

Please. Return your personal Bio-Computer with the easy-to-understand illustrated instruction book. I'm enclosing \$9.95 to cover all costs, including postage. But don't deposit my check or money order for 31 days after it is in the mail. If I return the Bio-Computer—for any reason—I will be sure that I retain my uncashed check or money order to me.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

EDITOR'S CORNER

We're not going to be modest. It happens that we think this first issue of ODYSSEY is one of the most interesting debuts ever offered in the science fiction genre.

There are reasons for our pride. For one thing, we have a lineup of some of the most important authors around:

- 1) Robert Silverberg
- 2) Frederik Pohl
- 3) Robert Bloch
- 4) Theodore Sturgeon
- 5) Jerry Pournelle
- 6) Thomas Scortis

That's not a bad start, is it? But there are other names you'll recognize also in this first issue.

Then, too, we have some firsts: Silverberg's only book review column ever; the first fanzine column by Charlie Brown published in a professional magazine; and, in a sense, everything else is likewise a first because nothing published herein has appeared anywhere else, with the exception of the Zenna Henderson interview by Paul Walker, which was printed in an amateur publication with a few hundred readers.

We'll be hiring some of the top artists around: Kelly Freas, Jack Gaughan, others. We'll have more indi-

vidual features and fiction than most of the competition; and one important other attraction—more diversity of story-type. Not everything will be nuts-and bolts; nor will we become so enamored of the new wave or the experimental that we'll feature only this type. The most crucial consideration will be quality. Is it good? Is it readable? Is it something more than an exercise of an author's scientific knowledge or his arty ravings?

We're open to reader comment. We want to hear from those who buy ODYSSEY. What do you like about the magazine. What don't you like. Ideas. We're ready for them. And you can count on personal attention to every letter.

In the next issue, we'll have a 27,000-word novelette by Larry Niven; Silverberg's reviews return; Forry Ackerman contributes a movie review feature covering the film version of *Logan's Run*; and so on.

Good things. Top name authors—along with promising newcomers. A heady brew prepared with the intelligent science fiction fan in mind, including those hundreds of thousands of students involved in the genre at the campus level.

See you next issue!

Roger Elwood, Editor

CATCH MORE FISH, BIGGER FISH...

OR YOUR MONEY BACK!

"Action" Fish Lure Swims By Its Own Power!

ACTION LURE swims, dives, flops like a crippled minnow! Buzzes like a dying insect! Drives pan fish, game fish, salt water fish into a frenzy! Gets savage bites that simply can't pull loose from your hook!

Completely under its own power, ACTION LURE swims and dives like a live darting minnow, then returns to the surface to dive again and again, even on a slack line! As amazing ACTION LURE dives down deep to where the big ones are lurking, fish see its free swimming action, hear its buzzing sound, and bite savagely utterly without fear or hesitation!

**Swims & dives to 15 feet!
No tugging; no pulling!**

ACTION LURE swims by itself without out being pulled. It swims various depths down to 15 feet for up to one hour or more, with a slow, automatic, random-motion that no fresh or salt water fish can resist, all the time sending out its enticing, buzzing insect sound to attract fish from yards away!



Yes, ACTION LURE heads in trophy size big mouthed bass, small mouthed bass, pike, pickerel, perch, walleye, darters, catfish, trout, and every other desirable type of pan fish, game fish, and salt water fish! Eye-popping catches are reported from every section of the country, so we say "Prove it to yourself!" Use ACTION LURE for a full month, see for yourself how you catch more fish, bigger fish, how your friends start on learning your amazing fishing secret.

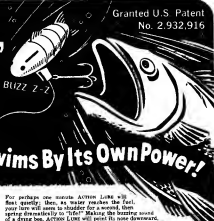
Works like magic even when other lures and bait fail completely!

You'll find in fresh catches where others aren't even getting a nibble, in lakes, streams, rivers, oceans, wherever you fish! Just release your self-propelled ACTION LURE skimming through the water in brilliant red, white & yellow, only 2" long yet carrying enough fuel to cut through the water for as much as one full hour with a single load! Plunging down to fifteen foot depths, rising again to the surface almost once every minute, ACTION LURE glides through the water tirelessly, pulling in the big ones from hundreds of yards around you!

Here's how ACTION LURE works: All you do is snap open the fuel chamber, drop in two pellets of fuel, and close the fuel chamber again. Takes less than 60 seconds, you don't even dirty your hands! And then... simply cast or lower ACTION LURE into fresh or salt water, and get set for the fishing thrill of your life!

ACTION LURE GUARANTEE

ACTION LURE is guaranteed to catch more fish and bigger fish in every kind of water, in every kind of weather. If you are not completely satisfied in every respect, return ACTION LURE within 30 days for complete refund.



Granted U.S. Patent
No. 2,932,916

For perhaps one minute ACTION LURE will float quietly, then, as water reaches the fuel, your lure will seem to shudder for a second, then spring dramatically to "life!" Making the buzzing sound of a dying bug, ACTION LURE will point its nose downward, and begin its first descent! Slowly, jerkily, like a startled minnow, it will swim steadily downward, bobbing and buzzing, traveling about nine feet every fifteen seconds! If no fish intercepts it, its descent automatically stops, it slowly rises up its nose and checks to the surface again!

And again! And again! Tirelessly, hour after hour, far beyond the reach of your own casts! Buzzing continually over every foot of water beneath you — even on a slack line — even when your boat is tied up — even when you're curled upon the dock, asleep asleep! And all the while ACTION LURE is swimming and buzzing and driving the fish around you to such a frenzy they practically tear the rod out of your hands!

World's first self-propelled lure!

No wonder this revolutionary ACTION LURE took six full years to develop! Here's what ACTION LURE will do for YOU!...

It frees you forever from the fussy tasks of darning for worms & crawlers, catching worms, or paying \$20 to \$1 for a bucket of minnows that die on you before you can even get them into your boat! It frees you forever from paying \$3, \$4, or even \$5 for those fancy "Dead-as-a-Doorknob" lures that only work when you tow them!

Tomorrow, for the first time in your life, you'll be weighing down your boat with bass, trout, pike, pickerel, perch... limit catches of pan fish, game fish, fresh and salt water fish, wherever you can drop a line! You'll fish better — easier or not — stand asleep at the bottom of your boat, then meet fishermen sweating and cursing at their area ache from exhaustion!

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Charlie Brown's Fan Scene

BY CHARLES N. BROWN

The science fiction field is unique in the closeness among its readers, writers, and editors—the only field of literature where the readers are so interested that they publish amateur magazines, popularly known as “fanzines,” write about their favorite books and authors, correspond with other readers, and hold conventions in order to meet each other.

Most of today's writers and editors started out in this way. Fans who eventually become professional writers include Isaac Asimov, James Blish, Ray Bradbury, Arthur C. Clarke, Lester del Rey, Harlan Ellison, Damon Knight, Frederik Pohl, Robert Silverberg, and others too numerous to mention. All of these people wrote for or edited the fanzines of the early years.

The first fanzine, *The Comet*, was published by Ray Palmer in May, 1930. Today, there are about 500 different fanzines published each year. Some print only a few copies for friends; others have a circulation of three to four thousand. Some are laboriously produced by carbon paper, hectograph, ditto, or mimeograph, while others are professionally printed. Nearly all fanzines are a labor of love and cost the editor money as well as time and effort. Although they have subscription prices, most editors give away copies to those who write interesting letters or send their own fanzine in trade. Most of the fanzines reviewed below are available only for money because they're expensive to produce—it costs a lot more per copy to produce 500 copies than it does 50,000 copies.

As for subject matter, fanzines cover the entire spectrum of writing. Some are devoted to amateur fiction, some entirely to book reviews, some to articles about just about anything, some to artwork, and some to personal essays. The best ones have a mixture of all these elements. There are stimulating letter columns in which readers exchange views of everything under the sun or even further away. Many professionally writers take part and the amount of reader-writer feedback is enormous.

In this column, I hope to review as many good fanzines as possible and tell you how to get them. Since it is impossible to mention all the fanzines published, I have to lay down some ground rules. First, I obviously can only review those magazines sent for review. These should go to Charles N. Brown, c/o Locus Publications, P.O. Box 3938, San Francisco, Calif. 94119. Pertinent information about the magazine should be on its first page, not on the envelope, in a separate letter, or hidden on page 37. Second, the magazine must be generally available to anybody who writes in and encloses money. There are many limited circulation fanzines that I enjoy, but obviously I can't review them. Third, I can only review well-printed fanzines. My eyes are very important to me and I won't strain them trying to read light purple ink on puce paper. Fourth, the magazine should be about science fiction or fantasy in some way. There are many fanzines devoted to comics, politics, medieval societies, nostalgia, and other subjects. They're sometimes fascinating, but have no place here in a science fiction magazine. The first installment below covers the top fanzines of 1975 from January to October. Future columns will cover only those magazines appearing in the interval between columns. Since this column is written several months before it appears, this is the only way to keep things current. Here we go:

There are three magazines which have dominated the fanzine field for the last five years—*Algo!*, *Science Fiction Review*, and *Locus*. If you want to try any, try these first.

Algo!, edited by Andrew Porter, is the most beautiful and professional looking of the fanzines: printed in slick paper, completely typeset, with color covers. The magazine features articles on science fiction by leading authors, book reviews, columns, and letters. Issue 24, dated Summer 1975, is 51 pages long and has an interview with Ursula K. Le Guin, some reminiscences on the Campbell era by Jack Williamson, a book review column by Richard Lupoff,

and a miscellaneous column by Ted White. The Le Guin interview is a poor one, and points up the chief problem with *Algo!*: Most articles are too short; they are surveys, not studies, and material by or about famous writers is published even if it's not especially interesting or well-written. The high points of the issue are the reviews by Lupoff, and the glimpses of the past by Jack Williamson. *Algo!* is only published twice each year. This tends to make the long letter column dated and to destroy continuity between issues, but it's still a fine magazine with near perfect layout and graphics. Single issues are \$1.50, subscriptions are 6 for \$8.00 from *Algo! Magazine*, Box 4175, New York, N.Y. 10017.

Science Fiction Review, edited by Richard Geis, is the most famous of the fan publications. It features much the same type of material as *Algo!*, but more of it. It has little in the way of distinctive layout or graphics, is printed on cheap newspaper stock, but has lots of text crammed in. Issue 14 of the new series, dated August 1975, is 46 pages long and has an excellent, but slightly dated, interview with Philip Jose Farmer, a report on the Nebula banquet by Charles Runyon, one paragraph fiction (?) by Asimov and Le Guin, and a column on SF art. There are also numerous reviews by the editor and letters from many well-known SF personalities. *SFR* is the liveliest of the fanzines, but the editor tends to be glib and to shoot from the hip instead of thinking things out. He also prefers controversy to facts and will print controversial material even if he knows it can be demolished easily. *SFR* is published quarterly, costs \$1.25 per issue, 4 for \$4.00, and is available from *SF Review*, Box 11408, Portland, Oreg. 97211.

Locus, the Newspaper of the Science Fiction Field, is unlike the above magazines because it's not a magazine so much as a trade journal. It appears every three weeks and features news of what is going on in science fiction. It has market reports for writers and would-be writers, news on new magazines and books, reviews, reports on past conventions and listings of future ones, listings of forthcoming books, and nearly everything else that can be considered “news.” Issue 179, dated Sept. 27, 1975, is 8 pages of fine print, and has news of several new magazines, a report on the Australian World SF Convention, a report on the National SF Convention, information about future conventions, notes on SF personalities, market reports, reviews, notes about upcoming books, a column about future movies, and a long appreciation of the late James Blish writ-

(Continued on page 8)

HOW I MADE A FORTUNE AT THE TRACK

The true story of Jimmy Davis, gambling pro who discovered the first proven method for winning at the track—INVESTMENT WAGERING As told to Ken Martin

My interview revealed a fascinating—and highly successful individual. Jimmy D's story gives inspiration to millions!

Until 12 years ago I was one of the country's biggest Welsh gypsy "high rollers." I won big, lost big, went from rags to riches bet after bet. Then I discovered a method so fantastic, my winnings speak for themselves. Since I began investment wagering more than 12 years ago, I've made more money on some races than most professional gamblers make in a lifetime. What's more... it's so simple, I could teach investment wagering to you—in a short time!

Back in the old days, I had a ball! Loud clothes, flashy jewelry, gorgeous gals. What a life! I played every racetrack you could name. And I knew them all; the big stars, famous gamblers, names that still set your ears on fire! One thing about us high rollers—you could always trust another to come through when the chips were down. And believe me... when you gamble high and lose—you're really broke.

• On October 5, 1974 at Calder in Miami on a \$2.00 Trifecta... I won \$1397.00! Investment wagering made it seem easy.

WHAT IS INVESTMENT WAGERING?

The first proven method that works at the track... any track, any time. You're actually investing your money like a financial manager. Only the profits are greater. And your money can be safer than in stocks. What's more, you bet what you want... earn as much as you need... week in, week out. What you make depends on how much you can bet. (This is a progressive method—based on best bets. But the best bets I mean are MY bets, not somebody else's.) I have two main methods... for two kinds of action.

#1 FOR LIFETIME INCOME

That's for guys like me—retired or ready to retire (whether you're 25 or 65) who want to make a living at the track. You get a high constant profit on your betting investment... every week. Plus lots of action—7 horses every 2 days. And it's simple!

In fact, the beauty of this system is its simplicity. A good friend of mine said, "Sure it works for you, but an amateur would lose his shirt." So I sent this man's brother to Gulfstream last winter—with \$5,000 and my method. He'd never bet on a horse in his life. He left Miami with \$9,300—a profit of 86%.

You get my point? But #1 is no giveaway method. You have to spend some time—getting it down pat. Believe me—it's worth the time. From then on you'll need 1 minute a race to make whatever you want.

#2 FOR SAFE, STEADY EARNINGS

That's for guys who want even more safety—and a bit less action. It's for "Saturday warriors"... out for a good time, and no chance of losing. If #2 is your choice, you're assured a safe, steady return... every week you play.

The Real Reason I'm Offering INVESTMENT WAGERING to You... Almost As A Gift!

Using INVESTMENT WAGERING has made me rich. And when a man comes to the end of this life, he likes to leave something behind that will be useful to other people. I love horses and racing, and INVESTMENT WAGERING made it possible for me to make big profits from something I love doing. Could any man ask for more out of life I don't think so. Well, I got some bad news about my health recently; it turns out that I have a terminal illness and I'll be cashing in my chips soon. At first, I was shocked, but when I realized that I've made more money and had more fun in my life than most people, it made this tough news a little easier to take. It also made me want to leave a legacy of good luck to all you fellow horse players who haven't had my INVESTMENT WAGERING methods to help you enjoy life more. I've seen too many guys lose their shirts on systems they thought would win. I know my INVESTMENT WAGERING system works and will show up all those other so-called "winning systems." I'm sure of this because you can prove my methods are winners—before you bet a cent!

I'll take you by the hand (like a newborn babe) and show you—step by step—how to use both my methods. Play them on paper for a week or two—check them out before you make a bet. You must average 36% returns. Or else, send my methods back and I'll refund your money in full!

I'm confident you'll be convinced right away. Like me, you'll quickly discover how to use INVESTMENT WAGERING to live a happy, successful life. I don't need INVESTMENT WAGERING anymore, but you do! I think everyone deserves the best out of life... and the time to start is right now.



Jimmy D. returns with "Sister" to his magnificent estate in Georgia.

UNCONDITIONAL ONE-YEAR GUARANTEE

Investment Wagering Method #1 and Method #2 must bring you an average return of 36%. Otherwise, return the two methods within the next year for a full, unconditional refund. No questions asked.

I swear that all my statements made here are true.

Jimmy W. Davis
Jimmy W. Davis

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My publishers didn't want me to make this offer. But now that I've got a terminal illness (Cancer) and only a short time to go, I want to share my secret of winning with you. You see, I only plan to sell a limited number of books. And I'll agree to send you my system only if you promise to give 10% of your first \$1,000 of winnings to the Cancer Society.

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FANTASTIC WINNINGS YEAR AFTER YEAR

• In Gulfstream, during the last year of the twin doubles, I won the International Twin Double Handicap Championship by hitting 9 twin doubles in 23 days, for profits that ranged from \$642 to \$7,000—National Police Gazette.

• On March 31, 1973 I won at Aqueduct with *Passen Mood* (\$55 to win) in the fourth Wilt investment wagering this winner practically hit me between the eyes—it was that obvious.

Jimmy (King of the 1960's) Davis, a sportsman who has become a millionaire through supremely judicious and intelligent wagering, was back in Miami only weeks last week. The Miami News Mar. 14, 1974.

So it was inevitable. I got tired of always being days away from my next loan. Win or lose, I had a family to support. My kids got older, needed more. Those high roller days started losing their spell.

But 12 years ago—lucky for me—things dramatically changed! I combined my 40 years racing experience and the secrets the pros leaked out, with the smarts of an old college friend. Our two brains... his computer... a couple of years testing... and I knew I had it. The method of betting that's made me a fortune. The one I call investment wagering.

(Continued from page 6)

ten by Robert A. W. Lowndes. I'm too prejudiced to be able to tell you its faults, because it's edited by me and my wife, Dena. *Locus* is published approximately 18 times per year and is 50¢ for a sample issue, 14 for \$6.00, or 30 for \$12.00, from Locus Publications, P.O. Box 3938, San Francisco, Calif. 94119.

These three are the most popular of the modern fanzines. All have won Hugo awards for the best fanzine of the year. Two other magazines which are very popular are *Outworlds* and *SF Commentary*.

Outworlds, edited by William Bowers, is subtitled *The Eclectic Fanzine*. You never know what to expect until it comes in the mail. In the past, there have been issues devoted almost entirely to artwork, issues with nothing but letters, issues with strange layout, and even issues devoted entirely to science fiction. Issue 24, dated May, 1975, is 32 pages of fine print with very little in the way of illustration. Most of the issue is devoted to fanzine history, since it was published in honor of the 45th anniversary of fanzine publishing. There is material by Bob Tucker, Robert A. W. Lowndes, Dave Locke, and Susan Wood. The issue also has a long letter column with material by Jerry Pournelle, Philip Jose Farmer, and others. *Outworlds* is published quarterly and costs \$4.00 for 4 issues from Bill Bowers, Box 2521, North Canton, Ohio 44720.

SF Commentary, edited by Bruce Gillespie, is a mimeographed magazine published in Australia. It's a critical journal with a haphazard schedule. Sometimes a year will pass between issues and sometimes there will be several issues in one month. There is no artwork or even layout, just page after page of small type devoted to criticism of books, letters disagreeing with past issues, and comments from authors and readers. Issue 41/42, dated February, 1975, is a double-size (and double price) monster of 102 oversize pages. It features an excellent critical review by George Turner of Le Guin's *THE DISPOSSESSED*, and several articles on criticism and SF in general. There's also a critical study by Peter Nicholls of Le Guin's *EARTHSEA* trilogy. The letter column has words by Philip Jose Farmer, Stanislaw Lem, Patrick McGuire, Susan Wood, and others. *SF Commentary* is published on an irregular schedule and costs \$1.00 U.S. per issue, 5 for \$5.00 from Bruce Gillespie, Box 5195AA, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia. Remember, it's a

foreign country, so send international money orders or cash, not checks.

Another overseas magazine of interest is *Vector*, edited by Christopher Fowler. *Vector* is the critical journal of the British SF Association and is devoted to articles and reviews. Issue 69, dated Summer, 1975, is 50 pages long and has articles by James Blish, Brian Aldiss, Bob Shaw, and Tony Sudbury as well as reviews by Brunner, Aldiss, and others. *Vector* is published quarterly. For a sample copy, send a dollar bill to Christopher Fowler, 72 Kenilworth Ave., South Cote, Reading RG3 3DN, England.

If you like fantasy of the creepy crawly kind, *Whispers*, edited by Dr. Stuart David Schiff, is undoubtedly the best in the field. Issue 6/7, June, 1975, is a double size number with 132 pages devoted to weird fiction. There are stories by Fritz Leiber, Carl Jacobi, Manly Wade Wellman, Joseph Payne Brennan, and others. There are reprints of letters from Robert E. Howard to H. P. Lovecraft, and articles by Frank Belknap Long and E. Hoffman Price. There is also a fair amount of poetry and artwork. *Whispers* is very reminiscent of *Weird Tales*. It is published quarterly and costs \$1.75 per issue or 4 for \$6.50. Copies of the current double issue are \$3.50.

Prehensile, edited by Mike Glyer and Milt Stevens, is not quite as well edited as the top magazines, but it's getting there. Issue 14, dated May, 1975, is 125 pages long and contains an interview with Ray Bradbury, a transcript of a panel on anthologies with Terry Carr, Robert Silverberg, and Steve Goldin, and an excellent article/review column by Joe Sanders. There are also lots of reviews and letters, many of which could have been edited more. *Prehensile* is published quarterly and is \$1.00 per issue to Milt Stevens, 14535 Seticoy #105, Ven Nuys, Calif. 91405.

Notes From the Chemistry Department, edited by Denis Quane is a neatly mimeographed irregular journal about science and science fiction. Quane likes the *Analog* type of science fiction and this is strongly reflected in what he writes and prints. Issue 13, September, 1975, is the usual 24 pages with articles by Jerry Pournelle and Joan Vinge on women in SF, an article on Ray Bradbury, reviews, and letters. The magazine is short, but well written. Cost is 30¢ per issue from Denis Quane, Box CC, Commerce, Tex. 75428.

Don-O-Seur, edited by Don C. Thompson, is a mediocre looking fanzine with generally poor artwork and

layout. Fortunately, Thompson writes most of the material himself and is one of the best essayists practicing today. He can write interestingly about anything. Issue 42, dated May, 1975, is 32 pages and has Thompson talking about books, Hugos, writers, and conventions—all of it fascinating. *Don-O-Seur* is usually published bi-monthly and is 35¢ per issue or 6 for \$2.00 from Don C. Thompson, 7498 Canosa Ct., Westminister, Conn. 80030.

Amra is a very irregular, beautifully printed journal about sword and sorcery—especially Robert E. Howard stories. Issue 63, dated April, 1975, is 20 pages of short reviews, letters, songs, and gorgeous artwork. The two major items in the issue are a discussion of DeCamp's *Poseidonis* series by John Boardman and an article by E. Hoffman Price on his meeting with Robert E. Howard in 1934. *Amra* is 75¢ or 10 for \$6.00 from Amra, Box 8243, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101.

The Spanish Inquisition, edited by Suzanne Tompkins and Jerry Kaufman, is a well written general fanzine divided between SF material, humor, and personal essays. Issue 6, dated September, 1975, is 52 pages of excellent mimeographed material. Highlights of the issue are Rob Jackson's report of his visit to Arthur C. Clarke in Ceylon, a strange convention report by Gene Wolfe, and an interesting letter column. *The Spanish Inquisition* is produced quarterly and is available for 50¢ from Jerry Kaufman, 880 West 181st St. #4D, New York, N.Y. 10033.

Tangent, edited by David A. Truesdale, is a quarterly mimeographed magazine with mediocre artwork, layout, and production. It does have some good material, though. Issue 2, dated May 1975, is 62 pages of fair to good material including interviews with Anderson, Wolheim, Farmer, and Simak. *Tangent* is available by mail for \$1.00 from David A. Truesdale, 611 A Division St., Oshkosh, Wis. 54901.

Yandro, edited by Robert & Juanita Coulson, is the oldest general circulation fanzine still in existence. It has been appearing for over 20 years and features short reviews of lots of books, occasional articles and fiction, and an interesting letter column. Issue 232, dated June, 1975, is no exception. In its 34 pages, over 100 books are reviewed by the editor. There are letters from Gene Wolfe, L. Sprague de Camp, Dean Grennell, Joe Hensley, and many others. *Yandro* is available for 75¢ per issue, 5 for \$3.00, from Robert Coulson, Route 3, Hartford City, Ind. 47348. ★

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**Including RICHES, LUXURIOUS POSSESSIONS,
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TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE

It seems like there are only two kinds of people in life, those who hang on from one day to the next, **hoping** things will get better tomorrow, and those who seem to streak through life, successful at everything they do.

You know the type, in fact you probably have a friend who always seems to be one step ahead of you, an extra dollar in his pocket, a new car, a promotion at work, a girl, **whenever he wants one!**

SECRET TECHNIQUES OR POWER OF THE GODS?

Well, what does he know that you don't? Throughout man's history there have been certain individuals, people great and small, famous and unknown, who have had knowledge of **SECRET TECHNIQUES FOR ACHIEVING HAPPINESS.**

From ancient times right up to today there have been people who, (whether they knew it or not) have been **plugged in to a fantastic reservoir of incredible mental force**, a force we now know as **SUPER SENSORY POWER!** These people are so successful at everything they do that you'd be right in asking the questions "Is it magic?", "Are they human?", **"ARE THEY GODS?"**

NOW YOU CAN USE THIS INCREDIBLE POWER—S.S.P.

Super Sensory Power has existed since mankind first began to walk upright, but it hasn't been until just recently that this incredible physio-mental force was systematically studied, and the trained eye of science was turned upon it. **NOW**, finally, all of its principles have been categorically organized, and this most **god-like** of all human traits has been brought within your reach, making it possible for anyone who can read to experience these incredible benefits.

A professor, an S.S.P. expert of many years, an "Initiator" has finally organized and released the knowledge and force of Super Sensory Power in this remarkable break-through book, **SUPER SENSORY POWER REVEALED.**

I WAS A VICTIM

Mr. T.P. says, "I was a victim. I was exploited by people more powerful than me everywhere I went. At work my boss would always get me to do much more than my share and threaten to fire me whenever I wouldn't, and I couldn't keep a girl. Each night I would make up my mind that things would be different, but they never were. I was powerless to help myself. Then a friend of mine shared the secret of the Power Technique with me. He learned it through S.S.P. Wow, did things change quickly. I easily learned to generate all powerful "Sensor Waves" whenever I wanted them. Within a week my boss called me into his office, apologized for the way he'd been treating me, told me to take a week's vacation with pay, and **gave me a raise.** He said he must have been crazy to treat me the way he did.

And my girl? Three days after that she told me **I MADE LOVE LIKE A SUPERMAN**, and that she'd never leave me, **no matter what I did!**

SEE AMAZING CHANGES RIGHT NOW!

You can change everything right away, too! With the secret techniques easily learned from S.S.P. Revealed you can quickly learn to . . .

- **Actually prolong the length of your life!**
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- **Project yourself as a bigger and more powerful person!**
- **Control smoking, overeating or compulsive drinking as you desire!**
- **Increase your capacity to concentrate and remember things—in fact you can have total recall at will!**



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You want a better life now, and who can blame you? Why wait to achieve happiness, power and security? With the secrets shared with you in **Super Sensory Power Revealed** you can stop being a victim and walk in the footsteps of greatness. Join the secret fraternity of the greatest men that ever walked the face of the earth, men like Plato, Da Vinci, Caesar, Alexander The Great—all were men who shared a knowledge of S.S.P. and seemed to be more than just human, **almost like gods!**

CHOOSE NOW!

You've heard the story; now it's time to act. You need no longer be shackled to a life without hope, plodding on from one day to the next, **waiting and hoping for a break.** Do something to **help yourself** and your loved ones. **NOW** Make your choice for a happier, **richer** life by ordering this remarkable book, **SUPER SENSORY POWER REVEALED!** You can't lose with this **MONEY BACK GUARANTEED NO RISK OFFER**

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Out of My Head

BY THEODORE STURGEON

"Anything you want to write about, as often as you feel like it," was my assignment from your editor, who thereby, I concluded, must be out of his mind. It just goes to show you, being out of one's mind is not necessarily a bad thing, and that one pleasant non-sanity can evoke another, as, for example, the title I have selected for these effusions. Anyway, I'm grateful, and you're welcome, so sit down, help yourself to the zorch, and be with me for awhile.

I'm doing my best to stop reviewing books, because it is a pernicious activity which creeps up on one's time and thought until it begins to dominate everything—especially that part of the mind which wants so urgently to produce one's own work. So I'm glad that this is not to be a book review column. Nevertheless I can no more separate myself from books, and the desire to share them with you, than I can separate myself from writing. Or breathing.

How, for instance, can I hold in my hands so beautiful a volume as *The Science Fiction Book* (illus., 160 pp., New York, The Seabury Press, \$14.95.) without telling you about it? Large (roughly 8½ x 11) and luscious, it contains some of the loveliest, most nostalgic, and interesting cuts and color plates that could possibly accompany a world-wide survey of sf, from Lucian of Samothrace to Ursula le Guin. The editor, West German superfan Franz Rottensteiner, deserves high credit for his diligence and taste in selecting and arranging his visual material, and for re-orienting our sometimes provincial heads to the international nature of sf.

His verbal contribution is something else again. Rottensteiner has long been notorious, if not infamous, for his passage along that prickly path between snobbery and disdain. He is of course entitled to his low regard for various aspects of sf, its people, the courses it has taken, and its largely American genesis, but it would have been kind of nice if he had enclosed his prejudices in modifiers like "in my opinion" or "it seems to me." Perhaps he intended to, or felt that such amelioration would be understood or assumed by his readers. When it is not, his dicta come down from the mountain as heavily as tablets of stone with the thumbprint of the almighty on them. In a chapter bluntly headed "Why there is no sex in science fiction," for example, he writes "... science fiction continues to be a man's world, and those female creatures who appear in it are weak creatures, very much in need of protection,

account; even female writers present them in this light." Are you listening, Joanna? Ursula, did you hear that? Josephine Saxton, Pat deGruy/Winter, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Pamela Sargent, all you others with spearpoints on your distaffs, I can hear you now, some asking when Brer Franz stopped reading sf, and perhaps a few asking when he started. Meanwhile, nits become easy to pick, not so much by kind, but by number. Dr. Wertham becomes "Werthem"; *Stranger in a Strange Land* becomes a "paperback best seller"; Roddenberry becomes Rodenberry, and Tom Disch becomes an Englishman.

Fifteen is a lot of clams to lay out for a coffeeable picture book, but—for the pictures—it's worth every one of them.

The trouble ain't ignorance (said the turn-of-the-century sage Mr. Dooley), it's just the number of things we know that ain't so. Everybody knows, for example, that if you cohabit with someone for a year, or five, or seven, that person becomes a common-law spouse entitled to the full privileges of marriage. And it just ain't so. Likewise, a book reviewer is forbidden to mention any of his own works or any anthology or text which includes his works. I have reviewed books for a dozen different editors, and never once have I been asked or ordered to refrain from commenting on pages on which my writings have appeared; yet the myth persists. I have always ignored it, and have had one or two happy times in slamming the hell out of some volumes which, I thought, mismanaged their responsibilities, even when they did include something of mine, just as I have not been afraid to laud a good one under the same circumstances. But now I'm writing a column that is not a book review—right? So, even the myth does not apply, and I can go ahead and tell you about my favorite anthology for this year.

The New Awareness, subtitled "Religion through science fiction" (New York, Delacorte Press, 485 pp., indexed, \$9.95) is the work of Patricia Warrick and Martin Herry Greenberg, and what they have done is to select stories—some of them, like Zelazny's incomparable *A Rose for Ecclesiastes* and Moorcock's shattering *Behold The Man*, among the finest short fiction ever written anywhere—as expressions of certain facets of religious thought. As a contributor to the volume, I am reminded of something I once heard: that you can stop a centipede dead in its tracks by asking it in what order it puts

down its feet. If I had known that what Warrick and Greenberg says I was doing is really what I was doing, I might not have been able to write the stories. But you know, they're right. The insight might have been mine; the illumination is theirs, and I'm grateful.

Look at these beautiful placements of religious concepts with established stories: The Apocalyptic vision of the end is exemplified by Clarke's *The Nine Billion Names of God*. Moral behavior is expressed by Tom Godwin's great novelette *The Cold Equations*. For religious institutions, past, they have *A Canticle for Liebowitz* (probably one of the four best religious sf stories ever done) by Walter Miller, and for religious institutions, future, Silverberg's delightful *Good News from the Vatican*. And so on through fifteen concepts, fifteen very different stories. The unsigned Preface and Introduction are provocative, reverent in the holistic, rather than the holy sense, and quite profound. They and the rubrics which precede each story are annotated, and the book is indexed. A line in the Preface is worth quoting. In discussing the parallelism, rather than the opposition, of scientific and religious thought, the editors conclude: "The fundamental law of ecology is that everything is related and relevant to everything else. All the great religions through history have also expressed this same law." Anyone who can grasp this thought in all its permutations needs and deserves this book.

One marvellous little book which slipped by with hardly a ripple, also from England and released here as a Curtis paperback, is Josephine Saxton's *The Heroes Gamos of Sam and An Smith*. It's as shapely and wondrous as a soap-bubble and as solid, in its strange way, as an axe. See if you can find it. It is unique, almost indescribable, and defies the taxonomists. Unique means—really means—its own category. Don't demand anything of the book. Just sit back and let it speak to you.

I'll have more to say in later columns about the ones which are so special, the one that got away, the ones we need to mine for. I'm so glad this isn't a review column.

Cons they come, and cons they go. Usually I let them go for reasons much too complicated to go into here. But I'll tell you one I'm going to make if at all possible, and why.

I've just received a letter from something called Science Fiction Services, 2 Church St., Montclair, N. J. 07042, (and

(Continued on page 12)

Out of My Head

(Continued from page 10)

signed, by the way, with a totally illegible scribble) which announces SF Expo 76—a supercon to run for 5 days in June '76. Whether it's a wishful pipe-dream or the product of some organizing genius who really knows the field, I don't yet know, but if these folks do what they promise, it's going to be one of the biggest things that ever struck sf. They say they have both convention floors in the New York Hilton, that they will have 24-hour films for all five days, two lotteries per hour for 12 hours each day, workshops, panels, discussions, charter flights, exhibits by publishing and scientific corporations, and, and, and. One of the 'ands' is that they plan to poll the fans and find out what they want, and give it to them. Well, they'll do it or they won't; but even if they don't, I'm grateful for the dream.

Way back in 1952 there was a cover on *Galaxy* showing a futuristic city with people in futuristic clothes—and in the foreground, a one-manpower pedicab. I wish someone would unearth that and make a half of a big poster of it. Every time I hear dicta from politicians and corporate moguls about energy shortages and energy policies I get mad, because I know they will go right from the panic horn and demand more oil, more coal, more shale, more natural gas—more fossil fuels. Yet it is the fossil fuels which have gotten us into the fix we're in, the double bind of pollution and fuel shortages. Their purlind conclusion is that if we don't get more fossil fuels, we will shrivel up and die. The real truth is that if we get more fossil fuels, and keep on getting more and using more, we'll shrivel up and die a heck of a lot sooner, and take a lot of life-forms along with us. But before that happens, we will have spent a number of awful years under the thumb of those who can export oil—some of whom were once our friends. It doesn't take a lot of sf type extrapolation to imagine a Western Europe dominated by Norway and Great Britain, or a Venezuelan push to get and keep the Panama Canal. A lot of the world would like to get even with us, either because we've helped them or because we haven't—take your choice.

There is one rock-bottom basic axiom of biology: no organism can live in an environment of its own waste. But let us not overlook the fact that homo sapiens' astonishing adaptability can overcome the most basic of axioms. A good example: survival of the fittest.

We don't care how fit or unfit a human being is: we can make him survive even if he is no more than a tumor with teeth.

So let's look again at that waste-products axiom. I have read that Los Angeles alone produces enough solid waste daily to power (if it were turned to power) every state west of the Rockies, from Canada to Mexico. Stripped down to basics, solid waste is composed of some of the natural 92 elements, many of them compounded in forms susceptible to attack by organic bacteria. One of the main products of this attack is methane—swamp gas. Not only raw sewage, but the countless tons of paper, organic garbage, and, if processed, certain plastics can feed these bacteria and produce methane. Methane can substitute for natural gas, and it can be processed into methanol—wood alcohol. You can add up to 25% methanol to your gas tank right now, without any carburetor adjustment, and get a cleaner engine and better mileage with less pollution. With certain simple adjustments you could go to 50%. Ask any race driver.

This is no fantasy. Seattle and, I understand, St. Louis are already producing methane and methanol from sewage to power their fleets of trucks, plows, and city-owned cars. If we had the refinery capacity that the petroleum industry has, we could produce methane and methanol cheaper than gasoline. Efficient use of waste alone would serve as raw material—anything, but even if it didn't, anything organic would serve as raw material—anything. Manure from feed lots, scrub grass, salt grass, jack-pine, seaweed—anything. There's a guy in New England right now who has built his own methane generator and services it with the manure from two 1800-lb cows; it produces enough methane to keep his own heater going, and to supply the farm kitchen, and to run the tractors.

Landfills that cities and towns have been using for years are loaded with organic material. If we must have strip mining, mine that, and collect as a bonus countless tons of recoverable iron, steel, copper and aluminum. Set aside what is not recoverable and get on with research; it's still compounded of the same 92 elements, and ways can be found to knock them apart and recombine them usefully.

Here we sit with unemployment pushing 10% (and you know that's an average, and that it means 50% in some places) walling about an energy

shortage, when we have the means at hand to clean up the entire planet and turn the waste into power, and idle work-forces to get the job done. And all we do is let ourselves be frightened by greedy people who, like as not, are mouthpieces for supranational, profit-motivated oil dealers who really don't care where the oil or gas comes from as long as it can be channeled into their ultimate and capacious pockets. All we do is listen and vote (or not listen and not vote) for more fossil fuels.

I'm not trying to sink the oil industry. It could subsist and make a profit on petrochemicals alone. The only thing is, it couldn't make the huge profits it does when we use fossil materials for fuel. But when you think of all the other things it can (and does) produce and profit from—dyes, paints, medicines, industrial chemicals, and especially plastics—you begin to realize how viable it could be without the fuels. Someone asked me recently how many things I touched during the day that were made of plastics, and I've begun to notice. You try it. Don't overlook textiles, clothes, rugs, doorknobs, food packages, steering wheels, auto parts generally. Go ahead—make a little light flash in your mind every time you touch a plastic. Or try to imagine a town like yours if all the plastics were to disappear. Then understand that virtually all that comes from petrochemicals.

We don't have to wait for exotic sources—space mirrors, cheap solar cells, fuel cells, hydrogen engines, or safe atomic plants. We can begin right now, shovelling our own dreck, employ our poor, clean up our water and our air, be independent and proud of ourselves again and, if we organize it properly, make a profit. I'm not in the least against that.

Think about that next time an energy mogul, in or out of government, tells you that the current price-rise will amount to no more than 3¢ at the pump. That's your pump, down the street, for your car. It is also 3¢ on each gallon from every pump from the farm to the processor to the broker to the wholesaler to the market, and 3¢ on each gallon that each of those people use. And they call that inflation-fighting, and tell you the simple 3¢ is going to discourage some of your joy-riding and save the nation some energy? Come on, now. Get out your shovels. We can live, and well, on our own waste-products, and we'd better get to it. ★

Fantastic New Breakthrough In Computer Technology!

NOW A COMPUTER CAN FIND YOUR LUCKY NUMBERS

And Lucky Days! Lucky Months! Lucky Moves!
(In Career, Love, Lotteries, Sweepstakes, Sports, Games, Gambling, Business, Investments, etc. etc.)

— By Science Writer, J. L. Dunsdon.

Now—the same computer science that made it possible to put a man on the moon, has taken the element of Luck and reduced it to a set of numbers. The exact numbers (and how to play them) that can turn your life into a winning streak—day after day, month after month, year after year.

Luck is simply a matter of the right numbers falling into the right places; a matter of Mathematics, the Mother of all science.

Albert Einstein, and the other men who made atomic energy possible, knew all about the awesome power of the atom long before the first atomic bomb was dropped. They figured it out on paper, mathematically. With numbers! Numbers are the language of nature.

Simply because they're a lot more honest than words! Take the word, "beautiful", for example. It holds a different meaning for everyone who hears it. But a 7 is always a 7. And 11 is 11. Not 12 or 10 but 11!

Pythagoras, the ancient Greek mathematician and father of geometry, used his rare genius for figures to develop a vastly superior form of Astrology called Numerology. A system of prediction (and determining luck) that has fascinated astrologers and scientists alike for centuries.

But until modern computers were developed, no one could really put Pythagoras' fabulous system to the test. Then one day, not too long ago, a brilliant group of computer experts decided to try an experiment that had never been done before. They thought it would be fun to try and program Pythagoras' system of prediction (Numerology) into their computers.

And WHAM! They got the shock of their lives.

At first they couldn't believe it!

But after checking, and rechecking, they had to believe it. In effect, what the computer was saying was that Lady Luck is no more mysterious than the tiny atom. It could be understood mathematically. And now so could **She**! The element of luck, fate, chance, happenstance, fortune (call it what you will) could just like the tiny atom be understood mathematically, and even controlled and improved upon. In other words, armed with all the right numbers (and the simple information about how to play them) a person could actually change their luck for the better!!

A discovery far too important to just sit there idly inside the computer!

These brilliant computer scientists realized that this miraculous system couldn't possibly help anyone just sitting there inside the computer. Ways had to be found to make this information available to everyone, at a price that the average person could afford. (After all we're the ones who need all the luck we can get!)

Finally, after many months of further refinements and development, it is now possible to

produce **THE WORLD'S FIRST COMPUTERIZED NUMEROLOGICAL (LUCKY NUMBERS) REPORTS**. Each report is 52 pages printed by the computer itself. Each one is as unique, and personalized, and different from all the others as your own set of fingerprints. A fantastic achievement that would never have been possible without modern computer technology! (And of course the genius of Pythagoras)

Just what can you expect to happen after receiving your own personalized, computerized Lucky Numbers Report?

Even the most chronic "born loser" can start becoming a winner overnight. The kind of person other people envy for their good luck. All the breaks just seem to come their way. No matter what it is: Changing jobs. Getting a raise. Playing the lottery, sweepstakes, bingo, cards, contests of any kind. Horse and dog racing. Inheriting money. Gambling. Sports. Meeting the right people. Having a great love life. Making all the right financial moves. The stock market, investments, business opportunities. Health and well being. Personal, safety. In short, anything chance or luck plays any part in, and that of course includes just about everything in life!

Here are just a few case histories of people who've suddenly gotten lucky after receiving their computerized reports.

D. Burleigh:

"I turned a 22 handicap into a \$3,500.00 winning streak on the golf course."

L. Nistri:

"I won \$5,800.00 in the O.T.B. Exacta playing my four lucky numbers."

C. Benton:

"I really hit it big. I won \$30,000 in a lottery."

E. Phillips:

"Two weeks after I got my computerized report I met the man of my dreams."

HERE'S A GREAT CHANCE TO WIN \$100.

In order to document as much as possible the validity of this big breakthrough in Numerology and Computer Science, we're trying to keep track of all the case histories we can... of all the many people who've suddenly gotten real lucky after receiving their Computerized Lucky Number Reports. That's why when you've ordered your report... and lucky things start happening to you, we'd like to hear about them. If we decide to publish your case history, we'll pay you \$100. just for your sworn statement.

FULL 12 MONTH MONEY BACK GUARANTEE!

If you don't believe your Computerized Lucky Numbers Report has put you on the greatest lucky streak of your life within the next twelve months... simply return it for a full refund. No questions asked.

MAIL THIS NO-RISK COUPON TODAY!
 (There's absolutely no way you can lose a penny).

L-05

NUMEROLOGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE, INC.
 380 Madison Ave. - New York, N.Y. 10017

Please rush me my own individualized Lifetime Computerized Lucky Numbers Report. I understand that if I don't hit a real lucky streak within the next 12 months, I can return the report to you for a full refund. No questions asked.

LUCKY NUMBER DATA

Full name (exactly as it appears on your birth certificate):

Birthdate:

Place of birth (city & state, or country):

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY

STATE

ZIP

() Enclosed is cash, check or money order for \$9.95. (Plus 55¢ for postage and handling). Payable to Numerology Research Institute, Inc.
 Or, charge to () Mastercard () BankAmericard

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Expiration Date:

Signature:

Add applicable Sales Tax

Silverbob's Book Review Corner

THE COMPUTER CONNECTION, by Alfred Bester. Berkley-Putnam, 218 pages, \$6.95.

Bester, comet-fashion, soars through our skies in cyclical fashion, dazzling us every decade or so. He checked in in 1939 with a dreadful little short that won a pulp-magazine contest, followed it over the next couple of years with stories as brilliant as "Hell Is Forever" and as hackneyed as such titles as "The Mad Molecule" and "Slaves of the Life Ray" convey, then dropped out until 1950, returning with a cluster of short stories that built on all that was best in his earliest work, and clobbered us with two novels (*The Demolished Man*, 1952, and *The Stars My Destination*, 1956), that rank at or near the top of everybody's all-time-great list. After which, mostly silence until a few short stories in the early 1970's signalled the beginning of his third go-round. And now a third novel, serialized in *Analog* as "The Indian Giver," published here in book form under a trendier and more forgettable title, due soon in Great Britain with yet another monicker altogether. A welcome return of the master it is, too.

Old Bester hands have already pronounced the verdict, with which I am in agreement: it does not have the verbal inventiveness and headlong intensity of *The Demolished Man*, and it lacks the breadth and demonic power of *The Stars My Destination*, which is demonstrably the finest piece of work ever to come out of science fiction's magazine era. Still, Bester's third-best novel is superior to almost anyone else's best. For one thing, Bester is a professional, by which I mean he knows exactly what he is doing at all times. Each effect is perfectly calculated, beautifully set up, splendidly delivered. He abhors loose ends and wastes no words. He has a professional's terror of boring his audience; on every page he is hard at work, setting off rockets, waving bright flags, yanking out rugs. Then, too, he is a grown-up—no mere fiction-making machine, but a wise and perceptive human being who has been around some, who has been battered a bit by experience, who has learned and is willing to share what he has learned. And, lastly, he loves science fiction, loves creating self-contained imaginary worlds, and goes about his task con amore.

The story concerns a bunch of immortals named Grand Guignol, H. G. Wells, Captain Nemo, Lucrezia Borgia, and so forth; there is a live Neanderthal

mixed into things (and important to the plot), and no less a personage than Jesus Himself makes an appearance in Bester's frenetic 23rd-century world, and Bester gets away with it. For your seven bucks you will be offered a bizarre method for bestowing immortality on people, you will watch Bester take the immense risk of destroying his most appealing character (and you'll hate him for it, a mark of his success), you will get a taste—only a taste—of the fondness of linguistic fol-de-rol that distinguished his first two novels, and you will meet a crazy computer named Extro, a cliché redeemed, who provides one of the damndest shrapnel-and-high-tension climaxes this side of the 1812 Overture. Because Bester has chosen the treacherous first-person form, *The Computer Connection* lacks the terrible plausibility of *The Demolished Man* (it's hard to believe that the "I" who tells us all this is really hundreds of years old) and it lacks the world-spanning scope of *The Stars My Destination* (the single narrator can't jump in and out of minds or provide much perspective on his own actions.) Never mind. This is a gorgeous romp, a delightful book. It's not fair to ask Bester to top his previous achievements, considering the level of accomplishment they represent. *The Computer Connection* is no disgrace to the man who wrote those other two books, and if that sounds like faint praise, it isn't. He has given us a worthy companion, and a couple of hours of glorious intelligent science fiction.

GALAXIES, by Barry N. Malzberg. Pyramid, 128 pages, \$1.25.

Here we have what looks like a standard paperback package. The garish cover bears the tag-line (yellow on magenta). The spaceship was trapped in the timeless black vortex of an imploded neutron star! The rear cover is headlined, FORTIETH-CENTURY SPACE PROBE! in yellow on black. The jacket copy speaks of the dreadful pit of hyperspace, a terrifying black hole, a beautiful space pilot gearing her ship up to tachyonic drive, and something called "the unskilled ultraviolet of space," which ought to earn a copywriter's Hugo for its creator. In short, what we have here is a jolly good adventure story laid in the year 3902, a gripping and harrowing account of supertechnological triumphs and misadventures, suitable for keeping one amused

on, say, a flight from St. Louis to Atlanta.

In a way, we do. But I think the casual airport reader, he who is looking for *The Ramblers of Arcurus* or *Sinking Slowly on the Slime Planet's Sludge*, will be disconcerted by Malzberg's first sentence ("To define terms at the outset, this will not be a novel so much as a series of notes toward one"), and will be totally alienated by the time he reaches the second page, studded with dark autobiographical ruminations. If he lasts as far as page 16, he may find a bit of what he is after, for it is on that page that the exploratory spacecraft Skipstone falls into a neutron star's clutches and is lost forever. And if he can hang on for the remaining 112 pages, he will not only get his space opera (and a good one) but he'll learn much more about the difficulties of writing science fiction than he ever suspected. (Or ever wanted to know, I imagine.)

What Malzberg has produced is, actually, a work of fourth-generation science fiction. First-generation s-f, epitomized by E. E. Smith, Ph.D., was naive, wide-eyed stuff, full of innocent rapturous wonder at the glories of the boundless universe. It was the accomplishment of the second-generation writers, John W. Campbell's team, people like Sturgeon, Asimov, Heinlein, De Camp, Simak, and Leiber, to reinterpret the material of the pioneers in such a way that plot, style, and character would not cause readers over the age of twelve to break into giggles. In the third generation, this preoccupation with literary technique became obsessive, and the manner of telling the story sometimes shaded the (often familiar) matter under examination: viz. Blish, Budrys, Bester, Kornbluth, Zelazny, DeLany, et al. Ultimately the third-generation refinement of technique led to the dead end of non-communication, the extremes being reached by the *New Worlds* circle of the late 1960's—while at the same time the constant re-examination of s-f's classic content led to an exhaustion of theme. Fourth-generation writers have assimilated all the storytelling tricks, but they have lost all faith in the plausibility of the stories. They are without capacity to believe in the objective reality, here or at any future time, of galactic empires, omniscient aliens, faster-than-light travel, cunning robots, or disablistic supermen. Fascinated still by s-f, unable to

(Continued on page 16)

If Clark Gable, Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe Had Known About Biorhythm—They Might Be Alive Today

New discovery of hidden natural power can bring you health, happiness, success... even make the difference between life and death!

Imagine. You've run out of gas on a cold, moonless night. You're shivering and scared. But you must cross the woods to get home. Darkness conceals hidden dangers. You could slip on an icy spot, or stumble over a fallen tree. Just as bad, you could walk in circles for hours. Darkness also hides the one safe path—to a warm house, a cozy fire, loving friends.

What if someone came along and offered you a little light? Would it make a difference?

Of course it would. And that's why I want to share MY little light with you. It's called the science of Biorhythm. It may have made the difference in my life between success and failure, perhaps even life and death.

Biorhythm could make a big difference in your life, too. Let me explain why.

The Philadelphia Inquirer (Nov. 4, 1973) reports that "Biorhythm poses such a natural and logical explanation for our fluctuating health and temperance that it simply cannot be overlooked."

How I Discovered Biorhythm

Like you, I want to do the best for my loved ones. To insure my children's good health, my husband's financial success, my own sensitivity as wife and mother. And, of course, I want to really understand myself. But before I discovered Biorhythm, I only had "fate" and women's intuition to guide me.

I was often filled with self-doubts and fears. What if my husband had a terrible car accident? What if his business suddenly failed? What if my children got seriously ill?

And then a miracle happened. A scientist friend told me my fears **MIGHT BE PREVENTED ONCE AND FOR ALL!**

How could I not listen? My friend introduced me to the science of Biorhythm. He calls it "one of the most effective life-controls known to man and woman."

Clark Gable's Death Predicted

On the John Nebel radio show in 1960 a bio-

rythmist predicted that, according to Clark Gable's biorhythm chart, the star (who had recently suffered a heart attack) would have a "critical day" on November 16. He urged extra precautions for Gable on that day.

On Nov. 16 Gable died and the doctors, who had not heeded the biorhythm's warning, stated that "Gable could have been saved had the heart machine been available quickly."

The Difference Biorhythm Has Made For Me

Now that I've learned of Biorhythm, I'm less moody, more creative, more sensitive to my family, more aware of myself. Biorhythm might help you too make decisions more confidently, quickly. What's more, physically you'll feel more energetic, less run-down. Biorhythm might even help you stick to a diet. And as an extra bonus, try gambling during your "high" days—you might be called a "born winner."

Nature's Secret Clock

In brief, Biorhythm operates on the basis of our natural biological cycles. You know about women's menstrual cycles. Well, scientists also chart other major cycles: emotional, physical and mental. They effect each of us from the moment we're born. And we each have a unique pattern, based on our day and year of birth.

When these cycles are at their "highs" we're most likely to give our peak performances. When they're low, the opposite is true. And when the cycles are changing, we're in our critical days. That's when we're most susceptible to accidents and poor judgment.

A recent book on biorhythm reveals some fascinating facts. All of these occurred on critical days:

- Jack Ruby's murder of Lee Harvey Oswald
- Sirhan Sirhan's assassination of Robert Kennedy
- Arthur Bremer's attempt on George Wallace's life

What's more, Judy Garland and Marilyn Monroe swallowed lethal doses of sleeping pills on critical days.

Evidence Overwhelming

Industries around the world swear by Biorhythm. They credit Biorhythm for their outstanding safety records. These include:

- the transportation system in Zurich, Switzerland
- several European airlines
- over 5,000 farms in Japan!

The Long Island Press quotes Russell K. Anderson, head of a U.S. Industrial Consulting firm (March 30, 1973). "We have analyzed more than 1,000 accidents during the past two years and the amazing thing is that we have come out with more than 90% of the accidents occurring on the critical days."

Biorhythm Scoops on Sporting Upsets

- Muhammad Ali lost to Ken Norton on Ali's critical day
- Floyd Patterson lost to Ingemar Johanson on a critical day
- Arnold Palmer shocked fans at the Pro Golfers Association Play-off in 1962 when the "sure winner" tied for 17th place instead (he was at a biorhythmic low)
- Bobby Riggs lost to Billie Jean King on a day when his physical cycle was critical and his emotional cycle low (Ms. King, however, was at an emotional and intellectual high)

Research Study Now In Progress

Biorhythm could be one of today's most powerful sources for self-knowledge and life control. It helps you know the most important person in your life—yourself.

To help YOU discover Biorhythm's effectiveness, the Life Cycle Institute invites you to participate in a special research project. You can see for yourself how Biorhythm improves your health, your diet, financial success, family happiness, sexual responses, vacation trips, everything! At the same time you'll be engaging in valuable life-changing research. See Life Cycle Institute's special offer below.

LIFE CYCLE INSTITUTE

Needs YOUR Help In Our Research Program

Thanks to computer technology, Biorhythm will soon be available to the general public. At Life Cycle Institute, we are currently compiling results from thousands of Biorhythm users—and need your report for our on-going research. When this research is completed, Biorhythm charts will cost approximately \$10 a year—a low sum considering the work involved, and Biorhythm's effectiveness.

But right now you can receive a full year's Biorhythm chart for only \$6.95 plus .55 handling (this just about covers our costs). All we ask is that, at the end of the year, you inform us of how Biorhythm has helped improve your life. As a research participant, you will also receive a full report of Life Cycle's research findings.

Biorhythm is GUARANTEED FOR ONE FULL YEAR. If not totally satisfied with Biorhythm, return your chart within 365 days from date received and we will refund your money in full.

Act now. Fill out and mail the form on the right to Bio-Cycle, Limited, 4 Commercial St., Hicksville, N.Y. 11801 and let YOUR Biorhythm start working for you.

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I wish to participate in Life Cycle Institute's Research Study and get my personal computerized Biorhythm chart at a special research price. Enclosed please find \$6.95 plus .55 (handling charge) for each chart requested. I understand that if I am not completely satisfied, I will return my chart within the next 365 days for full refund.

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Date of Birth Day _____ Month _____ Year _____

Time of Birth _____ AM _____ PM Place of birth _____

If no time is given, 12 pm will be used. For additional Biorhythm charts, attach sheet of paper with necessary information (name, address, and date and time of birth).

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(Continued from page 14)

stop writing. J.J. they nevertheless taste a leaden lump of disbelief whenever they set out to tackle a tale of galactic derring-do. One response is parody, as for example Robert Sheekley's recent playful novel, *Options* (Pyramid, \$1.25), a delectable spoof not nearly so insubstantial as it appears on first inspection. Malzberg's *Galaxies* represents another approach, a desperate and heroic one.

What Malzberg tells us, on every page, is that neither he nor Heinlein nor Doc Smith nor anybody can convey the reality of what it is like to be the pilot of a fortieth-century spaceship, bearing a cargo of dead souls, that is toppling into a black hole. It is audacious enough, says Malzberg, for a writer to think that he can show us the reality of a middle-class New Jersey suburb in our own time; how then to handle all these unfathomable cosmic wonders? He can't. Yet he is a science-fiction writer, and he must try. So he does, magnificently, approaching his inconceivable thematic matter elliptically, obliquely, poking at it, toying with it, trying to seduce it into plausibility. Conventional science fiction novels of the kind this is packaged to look like bang straightforwardly away at their themes, hero, villain, problem, conflict, obstacles, complication, resolution, and if we have not lost the knack of willing suspension of disbelief we accept what their authors or saying, at least for the nonce. Malzberg can no longer suspend his own disbelief, and yet, oddly, as he wrestles with his impossibly grandiose conceptual burden of black holes and tachyonic drive, he achieves a kind of acceptance in the reader anyway. He persuades us, somehow, to glimpse the fortieth century. Of all his many novels, this is, I think, the most completely realized work of art, the most moving, the most profound, and despite its ostensible refusal to handle its material straightforwardly, the most successful work of science fiction he has produced.

Of course, I've lived on into the fourth generation myself, both as a reader and a writer, and my reaction to *Galaxies* may well be colored by my own accumulated troubles. Be warned by that confession of bias. *Galaxies* will probably not please the new reader of science fiction, the undemanding one, or the unsophisticated one. I think it will amaze and delight those who have grown and deepened since the days of Blackie Duquesne and Giles Habibula, and that it will altogether flabbergast the current generation of s-f writers, who will find their private struggles to make sense out of the unimaginable laid bare here in unforgettable manner. ★

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"The Project marks the death of our race as surely as radioactive poisoning," the red-robed figure of Exeter in the video matrix shouted. "What kind of a monster is this Vrodne who asks us to gamble our very survival on a fairy tale from another galaxy?"

One of the three men in the room cleared his throat and Vrodne, secure in the unconscious authority that twelve years as Prime Executive gave him, waved a silencing hand.

"Tomorrow," the figure concluded, "the choice is up to you. The answer is clear enough: Turn the government out!"

Skolyar, Vrodne's aide, snorted impatiently as the program concluded and waved his hand at the proximity beam which dissolved the colored three-dimensional image into colored bits of confetti. The spot in the center of the room where the matrix had formed its image was suddenly bare of movement as the figures beyond became clear and substantial.

"What's the latest prognosis?" Vrodne asked at last.

"Essentially the same," Verklan, the population minister, said.

"Worse," Skolyar said. "A fraction of a per cent since yesterday, but no doubt about it. Worse."

"It's fairly certain," Zoraine said bitterly, pulling at the pendulous flesh that hung like wattles from his chin. "We'll lose tomorrow. There seems little doubt of it."

"And Exeter will form the new government, and that will be the end of the Project," Skolyar said.

"No, I can't believe that," Vrodne said. "You know how politics is. The Project was just an issue, I think. He'll

have to continue the Project. What other chance does he have?"

"You amaze me," Zoraine said, getting heavily to his feet. "Twelve years of the dirtiest political infighting and you're still an idealist."

The Prime Executive shrugged. "Somebody had to be. On this whole planet there are only a quarter million beings left, and they'd be at each other's throats if there wasn't some central purpose holding them together."

"The weakness of the beast," Zoraine said.

"Just the sort of comment I'd expect from a professional political manipulator," young Skolyar said. The Prime Executive raised a restraining arm.

"Never mind," Zoraine said. "He doesn't offend me. Just another reaction to deal with. This is something you've created, too Vrodne, this almost religious fervor in the young ones of the Project."

"The thought of superior beings out there just waiting for us . . ." Skolyar said.

"Not waiting for us," Zoraine said. "We're not even sure they're still there."

"If they're not," the Prime Executive said, "we're lost."

"Of course," Zoraine said. He gestured ironically. "You see, youngster, even a politician can see the realities of racial death clearly enough."

After Zoraine had left, Verklan said, "I don't trust that man."

"Nor I," Skolyar said, his eyes a funous grey.

"He's a practical man, accustomed to getting things done," Vrodne said. "He put me in office twelve years ago."

"Put you? The people put you in

office," Skolyar said.

"The people?" Vrodne said. "To be sure; but behind the people were the hundred families and the heads of those families, and Zoraine delivered them as well as all the rest—the fraternal clubs, the euthanasia associations, the substantive realist society—all of them, and he delivered them."

"It's true enough," Verklan said. "I don't have a stomach for it. That's why I've never held an elective office. But it's true enough."

"And all this just to gratify his need for power?" Skolyar asked.

"At another time perhaps, but not now," Vrodne said.

"What other motive . . . ?" the aide began.

"The same as yours," Vrodne said tiredly. "He doesn't want to die."

Darkness had fallen when Vrodne finally left his suite in Government House and motored to his home some fifteen minutes away at the end of the city. The faint whisper of the air cushion under the automobile scarcely intruded on his thoughts. There was no sound from the car's electric motors which were driven by a small atomic battery.

He could not help but be depressed knowing that tomorrow would mark the end of his twelve years as Prime Executive. In that twelve years his world had shrunk alarmingly from a planet of ten million on the fragments of two continents to three cities of a mere hundred and fifty thousand beings holding tenaciously to the tip of a poisoned continent.

He could not believe, as Zoraine did, that tomorrow would mean the end of the Project, in a world already shrunken by poisoned soils and mounting

Find You

BY THOMAS N. SCORTIA

radioactive background only one thing amid the decay of hope and morality seemed constant and real. That one thing was the Project, the great robot ship now in orbit somewhere above him that in another two years would bear the last remnants of his shattered race out to some unknown rendezvous beyond this star and beyond this galaxy.

He brought the car into the stall beside his small box of a house that squatted, half-hidden in the dying foliage of the countryside. The isolated house was one of the few luxuries he allowed himself and that only because his wife did not care for the new manners of the city. Like him, Vrodne thought, she was a social throwback, someone who still remembered the grace of living that preceded the clean and well-defined death of the race.

Unless the Project. . . . A hopelessly idealistic dream, his opponent Exeter called it. Which was perfectly true, Vrodne knew. What did they have but one bit of evidence that another race like their own existed out there? A space probe that must have been launched eons before, when the very continents of Vrodne's world had not yet risen from the ocean floor. But the beings who built the probe were oxygen breathers with a G-o sun and a water-carbon metabolism and an opposable thumb. They had built a vehicle as sophisticated as those Vrodne's race might build, but they had done this so long ago that they must now have reached a fantastic stage of development.

But Vrodne's people had to take the chance and find this race because the alternative was racial extinction.

Funny, he thought, the wildest kind of idealistic project and still the only one with any hope.

His wife met him at the door. He kissed her, feeling lost and needing her touch in a way he had not needed anyone in years.

"Here," she said taking his things, "you look so tired."

"I am," he said. "I don't think I want any dinner. Just rest."

"Zoraine has been calling you," she said.

"I'll call him but not now!" he said.

"He said it was important."

"At this late an hour, nothing is important."

"Is it that bad?" she said.

"We'll lose tomorrow," he said.

"I was afraid all along we would," she said. "Still, you'd better call Zoraine."

When Zoraine appeared on the screen his face was flushed with excitement. "We've got him," he exulted.

"Vrodne, we've got him."

"What do you mean?" Vrodne demanded.

"Exeter. I've got just the hold we need. He'll have to withdraw from the election."

Vrodne listened silently while Zoraine detailed the involved story. It was a masterpiece of detective work and deduction with the structure so perfect that little innuendo was needed to develop the path from premise to logical inference.

"Nonsense," Vrodne said, "he wouldn't be so foolish as to use the family's own money against them. A dishonest politician might divert funds, but not Exeter. . . . Even if he were as dishonest as this, the scheme is the product of a man too clever to leave

about the kind of evidence you've dug up."

"Never mind that," Zoraine snapped. "The picture is complete enough and it will bring down Exeter's hopes on top of him."

Vrodne looked at the man's flushed image on the screen. The high color of his cheeks showed how profound was his sense of triumph. "You manufactured all this, of course," Vrodne said at last.

"Not all of it," Zoraine said shrugging.

"Enough to incriminate him."

"Does it make a difference at this point?"

"You can't destroy him like this."

"Surely you aren't going to throw away the chance. . . ."

Vrodne silenced him with a gesture. The appalling decision was his, of course. There was no question that he could not abandon the Project, but it would be foolish to assume that Exeter really meant what he said.

"No, not if it means the end of the Project," Vrodne said.

"I thought not," Zoraine said. He nodded condescendingly, and for the first time Vrodne realized that this final concession would indeed make him Zoraine's creature, wholly and inextricably.

"I want to talk with Exeter," he said.

"Maybe he'll come to the screen; I don't know," Zoraine said.

"In person, face to face."

"He'll never do that," Zoraine protested. "Besides, I won't allow. . . ."

"Don't tell me what you won't allow," Vrodne said, getting angry. "You ask me casually to prove a man a thief on evidence you admit is partially manufactured, and then you tell me what you won't allow. Get him. Arrange it, I don't care how."

"But. . . ." Zoraine began.

"Face to face. That's it or no election."

"You're not going to do anything foolish?"

"No, nothing foolish," Vrodne said tiredly. "Above all else, nothing foolish."

Zoraine called fifteen minutes later. "He'll meet you," he said. "He's suspicious, but he'll meet you."

"Where? Here?"

"Of course not. He suspects we're trying to make a deal and he isn't about to meet on hostile territory."

"Where then?" Vrodne asked.

"The museum," Zoraine said, smiling ironically.

"You can't be serious."

"Perfectly serious."

"That's ridiculous," Vrodne said.

"Not at all," Zoraine said. "Can you think of a less likely spot for compromise? Besides, it appeals to his sense of irony."

"All right," Vrodne said. "I'll meet him there. What room?"

"Isn't that obvious?"

"The Probe display?"

"Right before it," Zoraine confirmed.

"As you say," Vrodne said bitterly. "It must appeal to his sense of irony." He rubbed his hand tiredly over his brow.

"All right," he said at last. "I'll meet him in the Probe Room. Midnight."

"That's agreeable," Zoraine said.

"Shall I come with you?"

"No," Vrodne said. "Be very careful about that. Stay in the city and make sure everyone knows you're in the city. Don't try to be clever about this one."

"I wouldn't think of it," Zoraine said, his image already fading.

"I'm sure you wouldn't," Vrodne said, meaning just the opposite.

At ten he and his wife watched the late news coverage of the final day of the campaign. He was silent, lost in his own thoughts. When she finally came over to him and brushed his thinning hair lightly with her lips, he looked up into the dark planes of her face and blinked sadly.

"Is it that bad?" she asked.

He nodded.

"Twelve years is a long time," she said. "Perhaps it is better that someone else take over the job. The last two years have been too much."

"No," he said, "not if that someone ends the Project."

"How can you really be sure this is the way?" she asked.

"I can't be," he said, "but the alternative Exeter offers is worse."

"Surely some of us could survive in his caverns."

"Perhaps," he said, "if we were only talking of a century or so, but not for eight centuries. In eight centuries all of our detoxification systems will have failed and we will die. That's what our

government physicists say."

"Still, there might be a chance. After all, why not both the Project and the cavern outposts?"

"You know that can't be," he said tiredly. "Twenty years ago, perhaps, when there were still ten to twenty million of us, but not now. The drain on our resources would be too great. It's either one or the other."

He laughed humorously. "Just six months more and there wouldn't be any decision to make. We'd be so completely committed, Even now perhaps a hundred or so could make it."

"Then why not . . . ?"

He shook his head at her incomplete suggestion. "And drain the top men left in the world? We wouldn't even have a pitiful fifty years left. The race couldn't afford the loss."

"I wish I'd never heard of the Probe," she said.

"No, no," he said. "It gave us hope."

But in a way he knew what she meant and he was not sure but perhaps it would have been better without this impossible hope.

At ten to midnight, he pulled from his parking stall and took the lone road that skirted the city. The museum was located in the withered foliage of what had once been a great recreational park before the soil poisons became active. The sprawling buildings were a black complex of masses against the thin light of the stars as he pulled into the drive and parked. He walked along a gravelled path toward the entrance which slid open silently as he approached. He passed into the building; and in the central rotunda he took the well-remembered passage that opened into the hall of the Probe. The lights were muted, but the exhibit was unchanged. The hall was empty.

He paused by the exhibit, his eyes itemizing the familiar complex shape with its corrugated silicon cell panels and the two transmitting antennae. Although the original paint had evaporated in the years of exposure to deep space, enough of the oxide pigment remained to allow the reconstruction of the ancient inscription with its meaningless two lines of characters that read: "UNITED STATES" and "NASA". The meaning of the characters, if indeed they were more than a mere serial number, had eluded the best semanticians.

The Probe's purpose was clear enough. A decade before the last war, they had flown a similar series, Vrodne recalled, but that effort was long dead with the swift end of life on the planet already in sight.

"A fool's delusion," a voice said behind him, and Vrodne turned as Exeter approached. His face was red and

he breathed heavily. He was much larger, Vrodne saw, than his video image had indicated.

"Not at all," Vrodne said. "We have the elements of the cometary orbit in which the Probe was intercepted."

"If you can believe the data of a military orbit station."

"They were built to track bombs," Vrodne said.

"Which they did not always do so successfully," Exeter pointed out.

"Are you perfectly serious about the cavern proposal?" Vrodne asked abruptly.

"Of course. You mean you doubted it?"

"It seemed that you might be merely using it as an election issue."

"Vrodne, are you so completely out of touch with reality?" Exeter demanded. Then he laughed. "But of course you are. Any man who holds to the idea of the Project so tenaciously for a decade . . ."

"It's our only answer," Vrodne insisted.

"Has it ever occurred to you that the very society that launched the Probe may not even exist any more?"

"Perhaps not," Vrodne admitted. "It would be too bad, but the race still exists, even if they have forgotten the Probe. Perhaps we may be the instrument of restoring them to their former greatness."

"And if the race is dead?"

"Well, their planet will support our kind of life which is more than our own world will do shortly."

"I think you're completely insane," Exeter snapped.

Vrodne sighed. It seemed that there was no way out. "Perhaps," he said after a long silence, "perhaps that's one of the diseases of power, but I have to go on."

He told Exeter what they proposed to do and what evidence they had to use against him if he did not withdraw.

"You know the whole thing is a lie," Exeter said angrily.

"Perhaps," Vrodne said.

"But you don't care. Is that it?"

"I'm afraid that is just it," Vrodne said.

He returned to his home feeling physically sick. His wife was waiting up for him when he arrived and they sat until nearly two in the morning quietly talking about nothing in particular, deliberately avoiding the subject most in his mind. He knew that eventually he would have to tell her what he had done this night, and he wondered what her reaction would be. It was a far cry, this blatant blackmail, from the kind of almost unworried morality he had so earnestly professed in the days when he was an associate in the political philosophy department of the universi-

ty. Would she have fallen in love with him then, he wondered, knowing to what end the vocal protestations of political morality would lead him?

He was not even surprised that he felt no remorse. His personal dislike of Exeter had reached such a point that a part of him felt fully justified in what he had done. He wondered only briefly how much of his motivation was personal and how much a matter of conviction that in the end he was right. He finally fell asleep at nearly two thirty after a restless period of tossing and turning.

He awoke to the insistent buzzing of the commo unit by his bed. He cut the transmitter and said "hello" to the screen that slowly formed Zoraine's image.

"I suppose you know how it came out," he said.

"Indeed I do," Zoraine said angrily. "Better than you do."

"What do you mean?" Vrodne demanded, sitting up in bed.

"You incredibly naive . . ." Zoraine choked for a moment on his rage. "Don't you know enough to carry a detector?"

"I don't understand."

"Exeter was worried about your recording the meeting. Did it ever occur to you to have the same worry?"

"You don't mean he violated our agreement?"

"Dear, dear me," Zoraine mocked. "Damn it, of course he did; and you're the top feature on every morning newscast casually blackmailing Exeter in three dimensions."

"Oh, God," Vrodne said, cutting the image and springing from bed.

"What's wrong?" his wife asked.

"I can't stop now," he said. "I'll call you before noon."

Actually he did not call her until well after midday and by that time the election was irrevocably lost.

"What are you going to do?" she asked.

"I don't know," he said. "I don't know, but we just can't give it all up."

"What can you do?" she asked.

"We'll find a way," he said.

"Like last night?" she asked.

"Please," he said, "just try to understand."

"I've tried," she said. "It just isn't any good."

"Perhaps I should stay in town tonight," he said petulantly.

"Yes," she said, "perhaps it would be a good idea."

He returned to the committee room where Zoraine was saying, "If I had been more alert myself it wouldn't have happened."

"He says he'll close the Project in a week," Skolyar said, his youthful face

solemn and near tears.

"There are over fifty people on board who've spent the last ten years of their lives just living for the Project," Verklan said.

"And another two hundred, counting wives and dependents, at the launch station," Vrodne said.

"After so much effort, surely he won't end it all," Verklan insisted.

"Oh, he will, he will," Skolyar said.

"Unless we can outsmart him," Vrodne said, feeling a sudden excitement.

"What do you mean?" Skolyar asked.

"You can't mean . . . Why, of course," Zoraine said.

"That means only two hundred and fifty of the five thousand complement the ship was supposed to hold," Vrodne said.

"But it's largely automatic," Zoraine said.

"But what about the ones we leave behind?" Verklan asked.

"We can't afford to think of them," Vrodne said.

"They made their choice with today's election," Zoraine said.

"My God," Verklan insisted, "you're taking the best technical minds. What's left won't be able to handle the cavern program."

"It's a foregone failure," Vrodne insisted.

"This is the only way," Zoraine said, his eyes bright with excitement.

By late afternoon the arrangements were complete. With the authority of his few remaining hours as Prime Executive, Vrodne gave the necessary orders. When everything was assured, he drove home quickly and confronted his wife.

"You can't expect me to go with you," she said.

"I love you," he said, as though that settled everything.

"No. No, you don't," she said.

"You're coming with me," he said.

"I'd rather stay here," she said.

He had been prepared for this. She struggled only briefly as he thrust the pneumatic syringe against her arm and sprayed anesthetic through the fabric of her blouse into the tissue beneath. She sobbed once, turned, and then collapsed into his arms.

He carried her out into the dusk to the car. The drive to the launching site took the better part of an hour. When she stirred briefly he gave her a second injection. He felt completely unemotional about it. So much had happened that he had little feeling left to be shocked at actions which would have been out of character a week ago.

Zoraine and Verklan were waiting for him with their families in the last of the shuttle rockets. He strapped his wife

into the acceleration harness and found his own. The launch slammed him into the harness as two gravities built to five. Fatigue overwhelmed him and he slept through the two hours of flight and maneuvering to a docking with the great ship. Finally they were gathered in the control room waiting for the final countdown.

Below, three points of light glinted in the blackness of the world they had left. Of the many cities that had once sprawled across that world, these were the only ones left, and soon they too would be gone, he knew.

"It had to be this way," Skolyar said plaintively into the silence of the control room.

"Oh, shut up!" Zoraine snapped.

Vrodne thought of his wife below in her drugged sleep and of the suspended animation they would soon enter for the long voyage outward.

What would they finally meet out there, he wondered. A race of supermen, a culture impossibly beyond theirs? Perhaps.

Or a race that had forgotten the very existence of the culture that had launched the Probe ages before Vrodne's world had assumed its present form?

Or a dead race and an alien but livable planet? There were probably few enough of those. It was a terrible gamble, he decided, a fearful gamble; and all at once he was not sure that they were right.

In the end they had to be right. He had done more than sacrifice his race's chances for survival on their own world. Worse, he had finally arrived at the state where he must look upon himself, naked and undisguised. Everything he had professed, all the fine words that marked his life had fallen before the simple raw necessity of preserving the Project. Now only the Project and the long search remained and, if there was any reality in the universe, this one single event must be it: The search for that ancient race of builders that had signaled Vrodne's people across space. Without this final rendezvous in the future, both races might as well have never lived.

He sighed, wondering after all this, what those beings would be like. Before him the image in the fore view screens shifted as the great ship began its long acceleration passing above the plane of the ecliptic and outward. For a moment he saw the faded glory of the ringed planet before the ship's axis shifted and he caught one final glimpse of the receding blue disk of his home.

"Goodbye, goodbye," his tired thoughts said as the image of the ancient dying Earth faded forever into the blackness of space. ★

So here I am, surrounded by aliens. Aliens dangle from the ceiling, aliens lol periously on the walls, scuttle purposefully between my feet, even drool now and then from the crevice of this typewriter, the very typewriter (SCM Coronet Electric 10, I must note) upon which, however haltingly, I am attempting some history of the difficulties which are profound.

It is necessary for me to reach out periodically to slap them off the Coronet Electric 10 and send them thus in little clumps to the floor; their small shrieks

disrupted; all is quite confused, the transfer of chronology from one layer of experience to the next is increasingly torturous. Twelve months feels like three, three like twelve but I am quite sure that it is the "shorter" period. I think. I am not sure. I know my limitations. I am a humble if not broken man.

Three months and twelve days it is. I should have said that much earlier: the aliens have been in my quarters for three months and twelve days, establishing what they call a bridgehead to their eventual conquest of Earth. They

say that my experiences with the one were not as pointless as with the others? I am becoming metaphysical.

Not that the loss of my social life is the real problem here. It is not. I must aver that it is not. My real problem, gentlemen, has nothing to do with the obliteration of my rather sodden and fragmentary sex life; even in the best of times, alas, it did not matter that much to me and I can well dispense with the whines and inquiries of the rather bleak girls who dwell with me, night by night. They simply did not matter that much.

Impasse

BY BARRY N. MALZBERG

of pain are quite disconcerting although I have been assured, at some time in the past, that the aliens do not have any feelings at least as you or I would define the term "feeling" and these righteous squawks as I cleave a hand through them to open up space . . . these righteous squawks as I called them are somewhat guilt-inducing.

I am running, I think, I am running ahead of myself. Increasingly I find myself unable to lay out patiently the facts of my circumstance, relying instead upon the telegraphic condensation of material. Telegraphic condensation of material. But then I do not know how much time, really, I have left.

I am surrounded by aliens. Surrounded am I by aliens. The aliens are approximately the size and shape of golf balls: furry little creatures navigating or navigational by the act of rolling, bright little eyes and mouths laid into the fur like fine carving. Most of the time they are quite cheerful and their voices are quite deep for their dimensions: positive and positively declamatory. They speak with an accent of course, one which seems to be vaguely Yiddish or *mittel* Europe but then again how well would I speak the language if I had been on their planet a mere twelve months and three days? Three months and twelve days I mean. Sorry and to pardon. My time sense is completely

quite positive on that issue, that they will conquer the Earth I mean but for the time being they are perfectly happy with their conquest of my own

miserable quarters: two hundred and twenty-three of them having set up light or heavy housekeeping in these rather dismal furnished rooms, both of them plus adjoined bath on the fourth floor of a reconverted tenement on West 112th Street in Manhattan. Not a very amiable place, I do admit, quite cheerless in fact, but the best that I was able to manage on the miserable income of a graduate student and in happier days I was rather proud of what I had been able to accomplish with them, a certain *je ne sais quoi* of the spirit intruding: curtains, mixed fluorescence, pink tiles in the bathroom quite personalizing these confines and making a strong impression on the trickle of women who I was able to cajole into sharing my bed and body for the night.

"Oh Myron, you've really made it a cozy little place here." "Oh Myron you have such interesting, specialized taste." "Oh Myron, where did you pick up that furniture?" Well, all of that is behind me now, *recherche de temps perdu* and so on. That part of my life is concluded. It used to be women but now with the aliens it is obviously impossible to entertain and who is to

No, it is obviously impossible now that two hundred and twenty-three furry golf balls of aliens have come into these quarters to maintain a social life, I give it up willingly, I sacrifice it without pain, with grace, it is not possible to cleave my way through them to get to the corner for groceries let alone women. The aliens themselves are the problem. Their desire to conquer the earth is as earnest and uncomplicated as my determination in *temps perdu* to conquer these unfortunate women and I do not know how to handle the situation.

I simply do not know how to handle the situation anymore, I tell you.

On the one hand the problem is quite serious and the menace not to be ignored: these two hundred and twenty-three are the first of a vast contingent who simply intend to occupy the planet through density once the advance scouting team has sent back their report but on the other it is very difficult, I retain enough of an objective sense here, very difficult to take these aliens quite seriously. Their appearance is somewhat ridiculous and then too their accents are comic, rendering whatever they say (no matter how threatening) laughable.

I will not even attempt to reproduce their speech phonetically. I could if I wanted. I was—how long ago it all

seemst—a doctoral candidate in political science but I studied Whorf as an undergraduate and always had an ear for languages. Of course that is all behind me now, Whorf and political science alike. The aliens would not think it wise to attend class. They have made that clear to me.

"We would not think it wise, Myron," they have advised me. (Each of them speaks for all of the others, a gestalt consciousness of group mind they have told me, something like that, no leaders, no followers, merely a mass which is an extension of a single individual.) "We would not think it wise at all if you continued your studies for a doctoral degree in political science at Columbia University. Let us explicate if we may."

"In the first place," they go on with their odd but somehow compelling precision, "in the first place we will not permit you to go out alone; we would come after you, roll down the streets and along the very aisles of the classroom in pursuit, jump into your pockets, nestle in the crown of your hat and this would be very embarrassing; explanations would be quite difficult. In the second place political science is going to be worthless when we take over your planet, all two hundred billion of us. Your sociopolitical systems will simply collapse; everything you have studied will be inapplicable. Geology, systems retrieval, ecology, biology, exobiology, botany, sanitation and waste: these will be the studies to watch when our invasion is complete but political science? Political science? No, Myron, this would be a waste of time. Far better for you to stay right here and do your memoirs. Once a day you can go down to the bodega and fetch yourself a load of groceries; once a week you can go to the university bar at a hundred and fifteenth street and Broadway for an hour. Fair is fair. Otherwise it is best you stay here."

And so I have. And so I have. As you may have noted (I have a certain cunning ability to feed in offhand information) my task for these past months of isolation has been indeed to compose my memoirs. For reasons which will be obscure (which are because they are never explained) the aliens seek a rather comprehensive autobiography to be turned out on this Corona Seventy without carriage return but with full power equipment; otherwise they seem to feel that documentation is important, the typical life history of a typical Earth-person as they put it and indeed as I have typed certain complicated passages dealing with, say, my initial sexual experiences, they have clambered upon my shoulders, run little crossing patterns up and down my arms, chattering with pleasure as they

read the words pouring out of the machine and onto the paper at the rate of a hundred a minute. I am a rapid typist, I do not know why they find this significant but they do. Perhaps I reveal more than I might ever know. I have no idea what might strike the fancy or insight of a furry creature the size of a golf ball which is an extension of a gestalt consciousness and has delicate features graven upon the furred surfaces as if placed by an artist's hand.

I do not quite know why I pursue this expository material. Just fifteen minutes ago I was describing onanistic practices in a boys' camp of distant memory, the little creatures, seven of them, literally dancing up and down the sides of the typewriter, chattering to one another in their birdlike language, excited, indecipherable ones and then suddenly I found that my tolerance had been exhausted, patience had snapped and instead of continuing in my solemn, rather portentous way to amalgamate the dreary reminiscence in orderly fashion I ripped the page from the Corona and began on this instead, this direct summary, that is, of my predicament and circumstance. I do not quite know why I am doing this. I know my predicament and circumstance quite well already thank you very much and yet I cannot deny an enormous satisfaction. This pleases me. A sneaking, perverse, almost *justful* sensation overwhelms me, the feeling which a juvenile might have in seeing his parents in a compromising position. The act is valueless (even the primal act is valueless I say!) but somewhere deep within at a place which can never quite be known is a feeling of power. A feeling of control. It is satisfying at last to get all of this down on paper, satisfying at every level.

Because, you see, it is quite hopeless. There is no question about that. The aliens' determination to take over our planet, whatever their motivation (they refuse to discuss this) is absolute and I see no way in which we can deal with two hundred and twenty-three thousand billion of these golf balls appearing simultaneously in every crevice and palace of power on our planet, our home, our modest Earth. They will simply overwhelm us. The ratio is disproportionate. It is also quite likely that they will first foul the machinery of even self-extinction. We are doomed, it would seem, to witness them.

So here I am on the fourth floor of a tenement on the west side of Manhattan typing out a summary of the approaching end of the world. It has become very quiet indeed in these rooms during recent moments. The aliens have come down from my shoulders, moved away from my wrists, deserted the typewriter, even left the

floor surrounding and are probably at this time massing in solemn assembly in the bathroom, conferring upon the timing of dislocation. For all I know they may have chosen this moment to begin their final invasion; I have long suspected that the time was imminent and it might as well be now. How long after all would I interest them sufficiently to delay their attack?

Who knows? Who, after all, is to say. I continue to type in a high blaze of concentration. It has been a long time since I have been so at one with my material. There is a perfect union I may say between fingers, wrists, keyboard, paper, for the first (and for the last I must reluctantly suspect) time I have a chance to explain the true and real difficulties of the present situation and at this instant it is a matter of complete indifference to me what the aliens might do. It is quite simply—I do not quite know how to put this in a fashion which will not sound immoral but I am going to try—not my problem any more. It is the problem of the Earth, the problem of the three billions of them, it is your problem, assuming an extrinsic readership of which I probably have none. I have lived with this long enough.

I have, I repeat, lived with this long enough. And now it is time for the focus of responsibility to shift; for the moment to leap outward and into the lives of the billions who share the human, if not my own private, and terrible condition.

Typing I can feel once again the weight of the aliens on my arms, my legs, my hands and delicate wrists. They have returned, that is what it is; I look and they have returned from whatever place in which they were holding conference and are once again observing me with their pitiless, their remorseless little eyes, the clawed weight of them on me almost imperceptible in this sudden blaze of excitement in which I begin to type. For, as the aliens once again perch on the typewriter, reading with me hungrily these words which pour out of the machine . . . ah, ah, as the aliens do this, an insight occurs to me as on the instant which is as powerful and noble as any I have ever known and that is this: that they are fascinated with my rhetoric, that they are fascinated with my ability to explain this situation (otherwise why would they have returned; why I ask you?) and that if I merely keep on typing, keep on typing and typing for the rest of my life I may be able, somehow, to hold off singlehanded the destruction and exculpation of Earth.

So here I am, surrounded by aliens. Aliens dangle from the ceiling, aliens loil perilously on the walls, scuttle purposefully . . . ★

ETIFF

BY ROBERT BLOCH

This is the first time I've ever written anything in English.

Like all primitive language-systems, it's a clumsy method of communication. I had to study several days before I mastered it, but I'm glad I did.

It came in handy the other night, on that back-country road in West Virginia. And so did my human body.

The body is even more clumsy than the language. The construction is easy enough—just rob a sperm-bank and away you go—but I spent nearly a week, by earth-time reckoning, adapting myself to the limitations of movement and perception. And I never did reconcile myself to its ugliness.

But one must be tolerant, and I learned to cope; just as I learned to comprehend the simplistic structure of terrestrial history, geography, biology, zoology, chemistry, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, psychology, philosophy, theology, astronomy, technology and pornography.

I still don't understand their mathematics completely—for example, how did McDonald's determine just exactly when they sold their 18,000,000,000th hamburger?—but then there are some things we are not meant to know.

And the earthlings are fallible, too.

That night in West Virginia, when I dropped down to the road in front of the van, Rick and Steve thought I was a fugitive from the fuzz.

Rick was driving, and he jammed on the brakes fast, pulling over to the side

just before hitting me. "Climb in, men!" he yelled. "We gotta get away from that helicopter!"

Steve was sitting next to him, and he opened the door to pull me aboard. "Turn off on the side-road, fast—we can lose them," he told Rick.

"Don't bother," I said. "Look, they've scrunched."

And of course, they had scrunched—groccetting up and out into a bliz, right on schedule.

"Scrunched, hell," said Steve. "They've disappeared!" He shook his head. "I never saw a police helicopter do that before."

"Weird," said Rick. "Like I need a drink, you know?" And he grabbed the beer-can out of Steve's hand.

It was then that I noticed both of them were in a condition caused by alcoholic drink in which control of the faculties is impaired and inhibitions are broken; i.e., they were smashed.

"Maybe it wasn't a chopper," Steve said. "Could be a flying saucer."

"What's a flying saucer?" I asked.

"It's a UFO. Unidentified flying object."

"But I can identify it for you," I said.

"It was a plain, ordinary vroob."

"Vroob?"

I nodded. "You'd call it a space-ship."

Rick made a face. "Space-ship? What are you, a Trekkie or something?"

"Exactly. A something named Pzquedfflorzz. At least that's as close as I can come to it in English."

Steve looked at Rick. "This guy is

bananas."

"No, I'm Pzquedfflorzz. Pzquedfflorzz Ichtylopaughribbl III, to be exact, from Freebis M2, Quadrant IV, Vector—"

"Open another beer, quick," Steve said.

Rick reached into a six-pack on the seat beside him and handed Steve a can. "Let's get it all together. 'What you're saying is that you're an alien and you just landed here from a space-ship—'"

"Ohhhhhhh!"

The soft moan came from the interior of the van behind us. We turned to look at the girl lying on the bunk in back.

Steve frowned at her. "Sherry, what's the matter?"

"I bumped my arm against the side when you hit the brakes back there. I think I cut myself."

Both Steve and Rick were frowning now.

"What's the trouble?" I said.

"Trouble? Sherry needs a doctor right away, man."

"For a minor cut?"

"Could be fatal. She's a haemophilic. You know what that means."

"Of course," I nodded. "Let me help her."

"You?"

"I told you I'm an extra-terrestrial," I said. "Take me to your bleeder."

"Hold it, what do you think you're doing—?"

But I ignored him and climbed into the back of the van. Kneeling beside





**FRIENDS,
ROMANS,
AND
MR. SPOCK**

**LEND ME
YOUR EARS**

the girl, I examined her arm. Sure enough, she had a cut just below the left elbow and it was bleeding profusely. I lifted her arm and ran my fingers over the cut. The bleeding stopped. Then I pressed my fingers against the wound. It puckered up and vanished.

"Holy Heinlein!" the girl gasped. "What did you do?"

"I stroked it. A simple technique, known to your ancient Egyptians and modern faith-healers. Laying on of hands, that sort of thing. We do it all the time on Freebie M2, Quadrant IV, Vector —"

"I believe it," Sherry said. She sat up, nodding at Rick and Steve. "You know something? This dude's telling the truth."

Steve stared at her. "You mean—?" "Well, he didn't ask for any donations, so he's not a faith-healer. And he doesn't have enough wrinkles to be an ancient Egyptian, either. Besides, that flying thing did look like a space-ship."

"I'll drink to that," Rick said. And he did.

"But if you're an extra-terrestrial, what are you doing here?" Steve said.

"Same thing you are. I'm on my way to Connecticut."

"How'd you know that?"

"I know a lot of things. You're Steve Morgan and Sherry's your sister. Rick Greeley is your best friend."

"You've been reading our minds?"

"I've been reading your fanzine. And it isn't easy—your mimeo is terrible. Also you should justify your margins."

"You read Smudge?" Rick shook his head. "How could you? We only printed twenty-nine copies of the last issue. I thought nobody read it except Harry Warner, Jr."

"How would an extra-terrestrial get hold of a fanzine?" Steve asked. "I know the post office is fouled up, but this is ridiculous."

"Space-ships get around," I told him. "We make frequent visits here to acquire artifacts."

"In other words, you ripped it off," Sherry said.

I shrugged. "I could hardly subscribe, you know. As your brother says, the post office is undependable, and I doubt if there's regular delivery service to Freebie M2, Quadrant IV, Vector —"

"Why?" Rick said. "What would you want with a fanzine?"

"We're interested in pop culture. That's why we send our ships here. We've been studying your planet for years."

"Now wait a minute!" Steve looked grim. "Don't tell me you're planning to invade earth?"

"None of that crazy Buck Rogers stuff," I said. "What would an extra-terrestrial want to do that for? Do you think we need your troubles—pollution,

inflation, wars, muggings, television game-shows, political assassinations, Rod McKuen—"

"Then why come here?"

"Because I couldn't risk landing in Connecticut near the hotel, where the ship would be seen. But your fanzine said you'd be driving here by this route, and I thought you'd give me a lift."

"To the Convention?"

"Of course," I nodded. "Don't you understand? I'm a fan."

"A science fiction fan?"

"Why not? After all, fandom is a way of life. And nowhere is it specified that it must be limited merely to terrestrial life. Well, I'm alive. And when I got into your earth culture, fandom turned me on. Fanzines like yours, and proxines too. Your science fiction writers have some interesting concepts of the universe. Quaint, but interesting. I became fascinated with the naive extrapolations of Clarke, Asimov and van Vogt—the subtitles of the *Perry Rhodan* series—the autocratic imagery of your New Wave. I even read the first four pages of *Dhalgren*—"

"And you're going to the Convention in Connecticut? The Con-Con?"

"That's my reward for working on these earth-study projects. My colleagues, noting my interest and enthusiasm, created an informal organization to sponsor my trip here. The ETFF."

"What's that?"

"The Extra-Terrestrial Fan Fund."

"Oh wow," said Sherry, with the natural eloquence of a young earthling.

"What a break for us! Bringing the first actual visitor from outer space to a science fiction convention—why, it'll double our circulation! I can just see the look on their faces when we get up and introduce Pzquedllorzz lchtylopaughribllll from —"

"Please," I murmured. "No names."

"No names like that one, anyway," Rick said. "It sounds like something out of H.P. Lovecraft. Yog-sothoth, Nyarlathotep, Cthulhu —"

"Never mind about Cthulhu," I said. "He happens to be a good friend of mine."

"Suppose we just call you Pete," Steve said.

"That would be fine," I told him. "But just remember, I'm incognito."

"You mean we can't tell anyone you're an alien?" He looked disappointed.

"If you do, you'll spoil the whole purpose of my visit. I want to feel free to act as an observer, instead of being mobbed by autograph-hounds."

Sherry sighed. "You've got a point there. But just think of the sensation it would cause if —"

"I'm thinking of it," I said. "And I insist on privacy. As one truften to

another, please DNQ or I'll gaffate. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," said Rick. "Don't worry, we'll keep your secret. But are you sure you know how to behave like a real fan?"

"Of course I do," I told him. "Give me a beer."

"He's a fan, all right," Steve said.

If there were any further doubts on the matter, I dispelled them completely as we drove through the night to Connecticut. During our trip I drank a whole can of beer and threw up three times.

On Friday afternoon we arrived at the Convention hotel. Rick called it the Stradivarius, because it was a vile inn.

The lobby was a madhouse, filled with longhaired young women and even longerhaired young men, plus an assortment of older men with beards. A number of children, unable to grow long enough hair or long enough beards, were carrying around hairy objects called Tribbles. The place looked like a barber's nightmare.

"Is it always like this in a hotel?" I whispered.

"Only during a convention," Steve said. "Hair today, gone tomorrow."

We approached the registration desk and Rick asked the elderly clerk if his room was ready. There was a constant ringing of telephones and Rick had to shout his question above the din.

"Do you have a reservation?" the clerk said.

"Plenty of them, after seeing what's going on here," Rick told him. "Don't those phones drive you crazy?"

The clerk shook his head. "Luckily, I'm almost stone-deaf."

"Some hotel," Sherry sniffed. "I suppose the house detective is blind."

"Not until around three o'clock," said the clerk. "The bar doesn't open before noon." He scabbled through a sheaf of papers on the desk. "Ah, here you are, Rick Sneary, right?"

"Wrong. I know how to spell. The name is O'Shea. Rick O'Shea."

"That's the trajectory of a bullet bouncing off of something," the clerk said. "Why'd your mother pick that name for you?"

"Well, it was a shotgun wedding. But the justice of the peace was cross-eyed and he married her to the wrong man." Rick frowned. "Never mind my personal history—what about our room?"

The clerk nodded. "Maybe I'd better explain the layout of the hotel first. It's divided into two wings. All of the even-numbered rooms are in the west wing, and all of the odd-numbered rooms are in the right wing."

"What does that mean?"

"Simple. Let's say you're in Room 2953, and your best friend is in Room 2954. If you want to visit him, all you

(Continued on page 66)

Herb and Apple Johnson named the baby Jeremiah as soon as the amniotic test revealed she was carrying a boy. They revered the legend of Jeremiah Johnson, the tough old mountain-man who never died. Herb and Apple were forty, and obsessed with the thought of their eventual deaths. They belonged to four societies seeking immortality, two searching in the spiritual world and two in the scientific. The spiritualists offered the most hope, but were short on proof. The scientists received the most blame. By the year 2040 they should certainly have solved the problems of aging and death, but these scourges remained as mysterious as ever.

Herb and Apple had postponed having a baby until hope for their own preservation grew dim. Jeremiah was delivered by Caesarean, to spare Apple's aging frame the wracking torture of a first birth.

Naming the *in vivo* baby Jeremiah turned out a cruel joke. He was born blue and cold, already dying. The baby had a hereditary heart defect, one not revealed in the parents' gene charts. He was immediately placed in the steel and plastic womb of a mama-machine, which kept him alive, and within hours the lasers were burning open his tiny chest. For a time the outcome was in doubt. But the surgeons were very knowledgeable (on all but how to operate for age, as the Johnsons put it), and they saved young Jeremiah. Apple Johnson was told not to have her second authorized child, though.

Baby Jeremiah didn't draw a conscious voluntary breath until after the surgery. He would not have been traumatized by the experience if his parents hadn't told him about it—but they did, over and over again. Death and the nearness of death was their obsession.

Jeremiah first met the enemy face to face when he was four. His grandfather Johnson died, and Herb and Apple took him to the funeral. After one look at his father, Herb collapsed into a chair, where he cnded for the rest of the service. Apple held Jeremiah tightly by the hand and walked past the coffin. She did not intend for the small child to actually see his grandfather. But there was a mirror in the coffin lid, for those who did not want to look directly on death's countenance. Jeremiah had only to step back a little to see as well as the adults.

The still and wrinkled brown face in the mirror was not the granddaddy Jeremiah remembered. He consciously rejected the thought this was the laughing, loving man who had recently held and played with him—but something unpleasant and cold slipped stealthily into his mind, and became a deep, chill presence there.

When he was eleven Jeremiah had another near brush with death, and this time he was awake to experience it. The front axle broke on the automated school shuttle, sending it hurtling from the overhead monorail to the ground. Jeremiah was thrown forward from a center seat, smashing into the bodies of two classmates who had already hit the unbreakable front glass. An older student on that route had long ago rigged the automatic seat-lock arms so that they closed to provide the right signal, but promptly snapped open again. He was very bright in electronics. And the boy whom Jeremiah hit was very dead, but the girl survived, though with extensive brain damage. He visited her once in the exceptional childrens' home, but did not go back. The sense of loss was almost more than he could endure.

It was the next year, when he made his career choice at twelve, that

Jeremiah decided he did not want to die—ever. He selected biology, to prepare himself for the same search that occupied a fair percentage of the life sciences community—the elusive cause of aging. Most biologists looked for it, at some time or the other—but Jeremiah was getting an early start.

And for several years he buried himself in his schoolwork, finding that he had a scholar's aptitude for acquiring knowledge. In the pursuit of facts he could temporarily forget the burden of fear that rode his shoulders. He had already rejected the spiritual pursuit of immortality as basically false, a family of similar beliefs that could comfort but not cure. He chose the hard but potentially more rewarding path of science.

By the time he was forty Jeremiah was a respected microbiologist, and in deep despair. He had buried both his aged parents, each of whom screamed and protested to the end about the unfairness of it all. Much of their resentment had been directed at Jeremiah, who really should have solved the problem by then and saved their lives.

And Jeremiah had placated them with hope. He was deep into cellular entropy, the mysterious force that allowed cells to replicate only so many times before dying, and his research seemed very promising. But the final answer eluded him until Herb and Apple were gone, and shortly afterward he realized he had reached the end of meaningful investigation. Either his own talent had reached its limit, or there was a force at work here beyond human understanding. Since other and more brilliant people were working in the same field, the second alternative seemed most probable.

And perhaps that was the key—human understanding. There was a need to exceed it.

Jeremiah, Born Dying

BY JOSEPH GREEN

The physicists had done much better in resolving their one great obstacle to progress, the limiting speed of light. Interstellar travel had been a reality for several years, and five intelligent species had been discovered. Two of these were considered at least the equal of homo sapiens, though one was so alien as to have little in common, and the second was not interested in communication. Since only self-propelled solid objects could exceed the speed of light, little news reached Earth until a ship returned home. But Jeremiah saw an item of strong interest in that early report. The very 'different' species was said to live for a thousand Earth years.

In physical structure the long-lived aliens resembled teacups, their key life element was silicon instead of carbon as on Earth, and their metabolism was poorly understood—but it was a good place to start. At the age of forty-one Jeremiah Johnson, already feeling a loss of energy in his blood and a stiffness in his joints, stole the next spaceship off the assembly line. He went searching for a chimera, in a wilderness of stars.

The great interstellar ship was of course operated by a computer. His name was Clarence, and he thought of himself as a male because a sexual identity made communication with humans much easier. Clarence had two brains, a very large one in his massive chest that tied into the ship's control system, and a smaller one with creative ability in his cube-shaped head. Since Clarence cost almost as much as the rest of the ship, it was a tremendous advantage to have him portable. He had already walked away from one wreck, in a test vehicle. It was never intended that he should casually disconnect his larger brain and leave the ship, but that was what he did on Rigel Four. He and Jeremy had become close friends, and the human did not want to go exploring alone.

Not that the exploration of Rigel Four was very dangerous. The planet was a huge ball of sand, the endless horizon broken only by an occasional protruding rock, or the more frequent shape of a Teacup. The two explorers walked to the nearest native, and Jeremiah saw that the odd name was perfectly fitting. It was built like a gigantic crystalline teacup, taller even than Clarence's three meters, with a narrow pointed glass head where the handle should have been. He already knew it had no eyes or ears. They communicated by amplitude modulated radio waves, which these creatures generated in their own bodies. Clarence had their language in his memory banks, and could serve as interpreter.

"Is it true you live for a thousand Earth years?" Jeremiah asked, getting

right to the heart of his business there. He knew Clarence would automatically translate the colloquial term into local time.

"That is correct," Clarence responded after relaying the message. "And please remove your two presences from between myself and the life-giver. It is early in the day-cycle and my heat-plate is not yet up to temperature."

Clarence moved aside as he spoke, and Jeremiah followed. Looking closely into the cup-shaped body through a filter, he saw the hot blue morning sunlight being reflected to the bottom by the faceted walls. There a flat plate the diameter of his head was already pink with heat.

"Is it also true that you require only sunlight, sand and air for sustenance and growth?" Jeremiah asked. "And that you never move at all?"

"Those are the same questions your predecessors asked," came the even reply. "I answer yes to the first, and as to the second, we do move. We tilt slowly back and forth and turn around once each cycle, to keep the sunlight properly focused."

"What causes you to age and die? And how do you reproduce?"

"Our heat-plates darken with age. When the life-giver can no longer bring one of us to critical temperature, that one bids its communicants good-by and uses its last energy to expand its body into a light hollow ball. The head falls off, and the wind blows the body around at random until it rolls into a cup. The living partner fertilizes the ball and coats it with acid. It is released again and wanders with the wind until it collapses into shards. The fertilized cells absorb the dead body for sustenance, and build the first tiny reflectors and heat-plate. Eventually a new individual grows large enough to generate, and joins the communication."

"The 'communication'?"

"Yes, our sole pleasure is to communicate, as I am doing with you two now. The medium you call radio requires little energy. We spend our days absorbing and communicating, and our nights conserving energy against the cold. Anyone who does more darkens his heat-plate very quickly, and soon becomes a rolling ball."

"I'm looking for a way to increase our own life span, but I don't think communicating with you is going to help me," said Jeremiah, and led the way back to the ship.

Clarence connected his second brain into the control system and they took off for the nearest red star, where the planets should be older and the life forms likewise. Their first expectation was fulfilled, and the second partially so. They found a species on the fourth

world out that had existed unchanged for millions of years.

Unfortunately, they were not overly intelligent and their life span was exceedingly short, just one revolution around their sun. The creatures resembled turtles except for having somewhat longer legs. There were two sexes, with the female far larger than the male. They were hatched from eggs and grew with extreme rapidity for half their life cycle, then began mating and took no further nourishment.

For the second half of their lives the male climbed on the female's back, where he sank all four limbs into deep slots. These muscular holes tightened, locking him permanently in place. The male was grasping four sex glands, which excited an electrical current in the female's body that flowed through them both. The current was constant, but his ability to respond by releasing sperm through holes in his four palms was periodic.

"Not that it matters," the first male they found riding a female through a strange and glistening forest assured Jeremiah, after Clarence learned the language. "That is just a small bonus in the midst of constant joy." Or at least he would have said that, Clarence told Jeremiah, if his conceptual background had been similar to that of a human.

"We have creatures very like you on Earth," Jeremiah answered, intrigued. "They are much smaller, being insects, and are commonly called lovebugs. The correct name is *plecia nearctica*, and they hatch from eggs twice a year. The actual life span lasts only a few weeks, most of which they spend in constant mating. They fly around joined tail to tail, which seems awkward. They are not intelligent, unfortunately."

"Do you spend half your life mating?" the male shot back. The female seemed to have very little to say. "Isn't sex the greatest of pleasures for you and your small lovebugs, as it is for us? Perhaps they are more intelligent, in all the ways that matter."

"That may be, but nevertheless neither they nor you have quite what I am seeking," said Jeremiah, and left. They checked the other planets in that system, but all were barren. Clarence then performed an intensive analysis of probabilities, based on known facts about the types of stars where life flourished. The analysis was useless, so Jeremiah threw magnetic darts at a stamap. They flew to the nearest hit.

They found intelligent life in that solar system, so similar to the human it was uncanny. They also had identical life spans, and it hadn't occurred to them to try to change this. The travelers went on. Their next find was a very interesting and highly evolved species some twenty thousand light years from Earth,

but they refused to talk with Clarence and wrenched the spaceship away. Jeremiah ordered a retreat to just outside the proscribed territory. They lingered there, monitoring broadcasts until Clarence learned the language fairly thoroughly. After that it did not take long to discover the unfriendly strangers died in due course, like everyone else.

Jeremiah and Clarence arrived at a tiny yellow sun so far from Earth old Sol was lost in the haze, and thought they finally had the answer. The people there were very similar to the human, and the world's greatest scientist had just announced a potion that would keep one healthy and young indefinitely. Unfortunately, he was in his dotage, and his discovery was only wishful thinking. His frail old heart gave out and he died, shortly after taking his third dose.

"I know a few people like that on Earth, too," Jeremiah said to Clarence, as they left in search of a more realistic scientist.

They found honest scientists everywhere, but not one who had solved the problem of extending life. To each species there was a period, and for each member there was a lifetime. The travelers journeyed to stars unnumbered and unnamed, and wherever they found life they found its ubiquitous twin—that cold stillness called death.

For twenty years Jeremy and Clarence wandered the spaceways, having many hazardous adventures (though mostly it was dull and routine flying between the stars). Jeremiah's hair turned from brown to gray. Noticeable lines appeared in his face, and on the backs of his hands. He found his resolution weakening as the years went on. The galaxy they were exploring swarmed teeming-jumped with life—but it was all alike in one broad sense. Every creature eventually died.

"I am beginning to think our quest is hopeless," Jeremiah said to Clarence one day, after lifting off from a planet for which he had had high expectations. Twenty years of association had made the robot seem as human to Jeremiah as himself.

"It is certainly hopeless for me," Clarence answered, from where he was locked into the locus from which his large brain operated the ship. "My circuits are starting to decay, and sometimes the back-up systems have to be used when I have a tough navigation problem. I think I'm getting old."

That was a startling notion to Jeremiah. He had never thought of machines as creatures that could age, and yet it was obvious on the face of it. They too lived a vigorous life, grew worn, lost efficiency and finally stopped functioning. What difference did it make

that they were dismantled instead of burned or buried.

"I wish you had spoken up before," he said, somewhat petulently. Humans tended to get petulant as they grew older, and both of them accepted this. "If you're getting old, how is the ship? I hadn't thought to ask these last few years."

"The physical ship is getting a little worn also, but is still serviceable." Clarence assured him. "I think we had better head back within the next few years, though, if you want to see Earth again."

That idea hadn't occurred to Jeremiah. "Strangely enough, I do," he said, and asked for a course that would let them make quite a few more stops on the way home.

And they star-hopped for another ten years, while Jeremiah's hair slowly turned silver. A rasp appeared in Clarence's formerly pleasing voice, and the ship sometimes jerked and joggled a little while accelerating. These were medium interesting years, but the quest came no nearer fulfillment than before. And very slowly a form of tired resignation settled over Jeremiah, a foreboding knowledge that perhaps he would never find that ultimate elixir of life. In fact, no one throughout the galaxy seemed any closer to the secret than Earth itself.

And that brought a startling thought. They had been gone now for thirty years. In the length of time one of the very good scientists working on the problem could have made a breakthrough. While he was out here, wandering the spacelanes, perhaps all the billions on Earth were enjoying the longevity he had so uselessly sought.

They were nearing Earth anyway, and the thought jarred him into setting a course straight for home. Besides, Clarence was getting crusty and ornery, and the ship now shuddered and thumped when decelerating.

Somehow the quest for immortality did not seem quite as urgent as it had before. Perhaps it was because Jeremiah tired so easily now, and found it difficult to sleep at night. He had already realized there was little point in preserving his body at the stage it had reached. He needed rejuvenation as well as immortality. But if he found one, then surely, like life and death, the other would be there also.

Earth had not changed a great deal in 2112. The population remained stable at four billion, and every one of them still grew old and died with monotonous regularity. They remembered Jeremiah well, the starship and Clarence being the first of each ever stolen, and the authorities would have loved to prosecute. Unfortunately for them, the statute of limitations on physical theft was only

ten years, no matter how expensive the goods. The ship was so outdated no one wanted it, and it would have cost more to rebuild Clarence than to produce a new and better robot. Besides, he had become so human he threatened to file a lawsuit claiming the rights of an Earth citizen if they tried to take him away from his friend of thirty years.

Jeremiah signed a contract for his memoirs, getting a million in whatever currency was extant. The two old friends set out to tour Earth on the front money. Clarence caused a few startled glances now and then, but the planet was so overrun with visiting galactics of all sizes and types that he seemed no more odd than most.

Quite a few of Jeremiah's former classmates and colleagues were still alive, and he and Clarence visited them. Most had mated, and many had both children and grandchildren. Not that this mattered to Jeremiah. He had early in life decided to bring no children into the world unless he could promise them immortality. Hence he had not married, and his closest living relatives were a few first cousins.

Most of the retired old people he visited seemed reasonably content. Some lived in co-op villages of look-alikes, on the theory that the aged had experiences in common. Others lived with their children, in the hope youthful associations would keep them alive longer. All talked incessantly of their active periods in life. Slowly it dawned on Jeremiah that most of these people were quite proud of themselves, and what they had accomplished. The uselessness of it all seemed to have escaped them, as though they had lived only for each day and not worried about the inevitable end. They were also proud of Jeremiah, the ultimate outlaw of their generation. Quite a few asked why he had bothered to come back to Earth.

"Well, when I didn't find the answer out there, it seemed worth it to make another try here," he answered them. But when he mentioned immortality they looked aside, and one and all assured him they had no desire to live too long in their ageing and undependable bodies. Now if he had discovered rejuvenation, perhaps . . . but most were vague about how much they really wanted it.

Traveling on Earth was much more strenuous than life in space. Jeremiah tired after a few months and rented a chalet in the Swiss mountains, to rest and think. Something was nibbling at the edge of his mind, a small worrisome thought that perhaps leaving Earth had been a mistake, that the pursuit of immortality should not have occupied his entire life. (Continued on page 58)

The Prisoner of New York Island

BY FEDERIK POHL



Suley Bar Jay nudged her young husband. "What, what?" he demanded crossly. She pointed back toward Staten Island across the bay. The great clam-shaped blow-balloon that had brought them east was lifting away from them toward the New Jarsay shore, already starting its return trip. It was a pretty sight, corn-colored on its under shell, charcoal black on the upper, but very quickly it was out of her sight, hidden by the canopy of their boat. "You could have gone back on it if you wanted to," he said, ungraciously, but that was just his way. Suley paid no

attention. She was happy enough, in the warm sunshine, although the clatter of the boat crossing the waves made her stomach quiver. It was all very exciting, the big, blind buildings coming closer every second.

The man next to her cleared his throat. "Tourists?" he asked. "Is this your first visit?"

"No and yes," said Suley. "We're from Tucson Collective. This is my young husband, Sim."

"Abnar dallaFiglia," said the man, extending pink fingers clustered with rings. "I hope you'll enjoy New York. I



can't see why you would, actually. Unless it's a honeymoon?"

"Oh, no," Suley said. "I've been married two years now. Sim—"

"Almost a year," Sim said, releasing the man's hand. "Anyway, we don't have honeymoons in Tucson. Why do you go to New York if you don't like it?"

"It's my job," the man said. "I have to."

"So do we," said Sim shortly, and turned his back. Suley sighed. Sim was making things difficult. The repressed perplexity on the man's face reminded her of what she had been warned about, that Eastemers still practiced monogamous pair marriages, as much as they practiced marriage at all, but she didn't want to risk annoying Suley by explaining their family arrangements to the man. So she stood up to see better, and was taken unaware when the boatman abruptly pulled back on the throttle. The boat dropped down on its skirts with a lumpy jolt and drifted toward the dock, and Suley did a stumbling pirouette.

"Sit down," roared the boatman, managing to catch a thrown rope from the dock while glaring over his shoulder at Suley. "Sit down!" Sim hissed, catching her by the shoulder and dragging her back into her seat.

So she sat down, and really felt that the whole trip was blown before it started. They might as well have stayed home. At home Sim was only restless and wishful. It was not easy to put up with that in the marriage, but it was better to have him frustrated because he was the youngest husband than to be with him when he was feeling—what? Jealous, Suley thought. It had to be jealousy.

The whole trip had been Suley's idea, and she was tired of opposition. It had started in the family, most of the other wives and all of the husbands complaining at all that money going out of the group. And it didn't get better. The travel office girl was contemptuous. The airline waiter was sarcastic. Of course, he didn't like his job in the first place, as of course no one would; the solar heat always had to be supplemented with butane burners to keep the blow-balloon afloat, and he surely felt abused that he was made to work on a profligate energy-eating airship when that airship was carrying people on such trivial errands as theirs. (Though he didn't really know what the errand was, any more than Sim himself did, really.) And so all across the Bay Sim had glowered at the New York skyline as though it were something he had been sentenced to.

"You can get up now," he said with deadly, hateful politeness, and Suley realized that everyone else was already lined up and actually climbing onto the dock.

"You'll probably want a guide," the pink-skinned man said stiffly. "They'll take your money if you insist, but what they really want is drugs. Don't give them more, say, than one fix per hour. They'll bore you out of your mind with talk about what New York used to be, a hundred years ago or more. They have a great sense of history, not much of what's real."

"Thank you," said Suley, but the men was already climbing out and hurrying away.

The heat struck her like the breath of Marjo's kiln. They were on an ancient wooden pier surfaced with asphalt. The asphalt was soft and sticky underfoot. Around the edges of the paved part the old wood had decayed and mulched with dust and bird droppings and heaven knew what, and there were stands of milkweed and goldenrod and Queen Anne's lace. Suley unfastened her shadow cloak and let it cover her body, to keep the sun off. Sim already had. Through the shadowy net she could see her narrow, muscle-ridged chest, flat belly, bright blue sex-string, straight, haired legs. He was a beautiful little man! But so often so angry—

She bent to pick up her kitbag. "Where do we go now?" she asked.

He looked at her mournfully, shaking his head. "You were so desperate to get here, now all you want to do is find a place to take a bath and get something to eat."

"Well," she began, "I would like a bath—"

"Look around you!" he commanded.

So she put the kitbag down again, and looked around to humor him. They were, she knew from the tourist map they had bought on Staten Island, on the western shore of New York, a couple of miles from the southern tip. "Is this what they call Greenwich Village?" she guessed.

Scornfully, "Nah. Times Square. I think. Somewhere near there, anyway."

"Maybe we do need a guide," she offered, looking around. To the right was a sort of jungle of decayed and abandoned housing, and then, far down toward the tip, the famous needles of skyscrapers. Straight ahead, not very far, was another skyscraper, an immense one with a fluted, pointed top. Others were farther up the island, farther away, clusters of them. Suley was a little near-sighted and had forgotten to put her glasses in, but she thought the buildings all looked rather pathetic. Were the windows all broken? Were the sides stained with weather and neglect? Were pieces rotted off them? She could not be sure, but that was what it looked like to her.

She felt Sim getting ready to reproach her for standing there, and not wanting to plunge immediately into the city, and so she reached for the kitbag

again. All the other passengers from the boat had already hurried off on their errands. They were business persons, negotiators, even perhaps government people—there still was a formal government in most of the East. They had jobs. They were in New York because they had to be, and so they hurried because that would speed the time when they could leave again. So Suley and Sim were alone, except for the boatman, who was sitting on the edge of the dock, looking with little interest at a band of surbrowned (or were they? were some of them that color because of ancestry?) children screaming with joy as they hauled in a pot with a four-foot-long lobster in it.

Sim wasn't looking at the children, or at her either. He was looking at a man who was bounding toward them. And what a strange man! Even in that July heat he was wearing all-over garments. Not just a sex string and shadow cloak and sandals and hat. Not even shorts or kilts and a top, like the boatman and the other passengers. Trousers! Coat! A colored strip of cloth around his neck—was the word "tie"? Suley felt a little frightened, but she knew she could not show it, for Sim was obviously terrified. Not of the man, of course. Of the fear of handling the situation badly. Suley knew she had to protect him from the situation, so she stepped in front of him and raised her hand in the peace sign. And waited for what might happen to happen.

II

Sim stood on the dock with one hand on Suley's shoulder, because he suspected she was scared. She had been scared the whole way, he considered. She had hated the blow-balloon ride from Arizona and had been airsick twice, even though the weather was calm. It was like Suley to come even when she was afraid. It would have made more sense to bring Morra or Marjo or Gene-Ann, but Suley had offered with that Mighty-Mouse trembling resolution of hers, and all the rest of them had fallen into line. Although, in another sense it was best that she was the one, since the whole trip had been her idea.

Sim squeezed her shoulder while he looked around. New York! Skyscrapers! It would be almost worth the trip, he thought wistfully, if he could get on top of one of them. . . . what a feeling that would be! And there, he observed, were the famous New York street urchins, catching the famous New York seafood—mean, clawed, armored thing it looked. He looked wistfully at the clear purling water that stroked the corner of the dock. It was not a bad life, here in the old city, with all that water. . . . He felt Suley trembling and looked up.

A man was walking toward them in a loping, swinging strut. He wore a flat, broadbrimmed hat a little like Suley's, a red vest with green leather buttons, balbottomed green slacks with red stripings. Every garment was clean, but very worn. His face was not smiling but it was hospitable.

Suley ran in front of Sim and veered to the man in her nervous way. Sim said patiently, "It's all right, Suley. He wants something from us, that's all."

"Not at all, sir," said the man, in earshot. "I just want to welcome you to New York. My name is Harvey Hennessee, and I'm delighted to see you."

"Thank you," said Sim, waiting.

The man flashed the palm of his hand behind his head. "There it is," he cried without looking. "The Empire State, colossus of the old world! For many years the tallest human structure, and certainly the most famous. Built on the site of the glamorous ancient Waldorf Hotel, where Diamond Jim Brady and Lillian Held danced and flirted."

They looked up, squinting into the bright sky. "It looks bigger than I thought," Suley ventured.

"No, that exact size. Well. A little larger, at one time. A bit fall off, some years back. But it's perfectly safe now."

"Wasn't there something about a gorilla climbing it?"

"Fantasy, my dear person, only an old film. Would you like to know why it is that size? Human vanity," he said, taking off his hat and fanning himself with it, "the same story, always familiar. You see, there was another building—look, over that ginkgo tree there, you can just see the top of it—called the Chrysler Building, that was finished just a short time before our Empire State. Do you see it?"

"Which is the ginkgo tree?" Sim asked.

"That big one there. That very pointed needle just behind it—there, do you see? Yes. Well, the Chrysler Building was meant to be the tallest. But the Empire State was not yet finished. So they called back the architects, and they thought for a time, and they made a decision. They put a mooring mast for dirigibles on top of the Empire State, and that made it the tallest again."

"What's a dirigible?" Suley asked.

"A kind of early flying machine. Somewhat like a blow-balloon. It floated in the air, like a raft."

Sim looked Hennessee over carefully. He was a small man and now, with his hat off, not a young one. He had long gray hair and a long gray beard, but the hair was quite fine and sparse and did not conceal the shape of his skull, which revealed itself to be balanced like an egg on the top of his spine, the chin poking out before and the great round bulge of the cranium

hanging over behind. They would not have tolerated a fetus like him in Tucson Collective. Sim thought, but these Easterners were not very good at genetic engineering.

"I suppose you want to be our guide," Sim said.

"Not at all! Well. Yes, in a sense. That is, I would be pleased to show you around Little Old New York, as it is called, or Gotham. But I don't want money."

"I don't know if we need a guide."

"I can tell you everything about the

interested in your Ohio piesters or Mississippi marks or whatever you use. A small gift, perhaps. Some hot-weather pot? Antibiotics?"

Sim shook his head. "We don't have any antibiotics. Pot either."

"What then?" said Harvey, wrenching his attention back to Sim. He began to tremble. "Psilocybin?" he demanded eagerly.

"Not psilocybin!" scolded Sim. "It blasts your head. Anyway, I'm not sure we need—"

"Oh, let's give him a shot, Sim," said



city! It's history. Its customs. Where everything happened—"

Bored, Suley turned away and squatted down, her shadow cloak opaque as the hem brushed the ground. Harvey Hennessee stared at her, forgetting to finish his sentence. Sim pondered. He could see advantages to a guide, but he was not ready, not yet, to tell any of these islanders just why they were here.

"I would like very much to show you around," said Hennessee, watching the little stream creep out from under the cloak. "And, forgive me, I am not

Suley, fastening her sex string as she stood up and kicked dust over the damp spot on the dock. "We have something I think he'd like."

Furiously, "Suley!"

"What, khet? Hash? Look, I don't want to get into heroin or speed or—is it acid?" Harvey asked, his face falling. "That's no good. There's all the acid you'd want here, nobody but kids use it."

"It's something like peyote, pop," Suley said gently. "We're from Tucson Collective."

Harvey swallowed and brushed his

beerd with his hands. "Something like, you say? I wonder how much like—" He glanced over his shoulder. There was another man walking briskly toward them, clearly a competitor. He wore a great scarlet sash over his chest that bore the word *Waicome*. Behind him others were hurrying in.

"I'll take it! I'm sure you'll be satisfied with my service, and—and—Oh, please! Wa never get *peyote* here. Ask Bob. He'll tell you I'm reliable." He pointed his beard appealingly at the boatman, who had been listening to the

dock and began to dicker with a young girl for three bicycles. Suley saw money changing hands. "I hope you can ride a bike, miss?" he said, wheeling one toward her. "Yes? Good. It's quite easy, anyway. I'll lead the way."

It was a simple shiftless lightweight frame. Actually everyone rode bicycles back on the Bar-Jay. There were still endless miles of paved roads linking the spreads around Tucson Collective. There were some automobiles, mostly methane-electrics, but they were not popular, and so when they didn't ride a

State Building, very clear now. Enormous, isn't it? Wa could go up into it if you like, climb all the way up into that skinny part sticking up. But it is a two-day trip, end in this heat quite tiring."

"Very tiring," Suley agreed. From so near the base of it the wicked old building grabbed into the sky. Craning to look up she felt quite faint, not only from the heat but from a dizzying sudden empathy with Charley Four Treas scudding frightened through the clouds and seeing that claw, or some other claw, suddenly reach up . . . Started, she realized the guide was talking about something quite like her thoughts:

"—struck by an aircraft. During World War Two, that was, oh, almost a hundred and thirty or forty years ago. Great chunks were knocked out of the building and several persons killed. But it held. It is very strong. Not like some of the later buildings, which have rusted away at the foundations and fallen."

Harvey looked around disapprovingly. They had an unpaying audience. They had been followed by half a dozen of the children, also on bicycles, now stopped in a semi-circle a few yards away. Harvey turned his back on them. "In the old days," he droned on, "when it was lighted with enormous searchlights, wild birds migrating used to fly into it and break their necks and fell into the streets. We do that sometimes still. At our festivals. Of course, it is mostly for the tourists."

"It's very hot standing here," said Sim.

"Yes, of course." Harvey mounted his bike and pedaled a few more blocks, then paused. "I am taking you to a hotel," he said, "a very nice cool place. But still—Here is something interesting! Just look down the side street. Do you see?" He pointed past a rusted sign marked *Bus Lane Only*. There, past abandoned vehicles, was an enormous walled hole in the ground.

Suley leaned her bike against one leg, like the children who had followed them. "I know," she hazarded. "The subway!"

"No, that is over that way. Lincoln Tunnel!" Harvey beamed. "It was a way of getting off the island by going under the river. There was a saying at that time. 'Stand on the catwalk of the Lincoln Tunnel and sooner or later everyone you ever heard of in the world will pass by.' And they did, dear friends! Think of the famous people who have gone down into that hole. Geniuses! Criminals! Heroes. Richard Milhous Nixon went through there on his way to his apotheosis. Lyndon Baines Johnson. John Vile Lindsay. Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Dwight David Eisenhower—"

(Continued from page 50)



whole thing.

The boatman shrugged. "Far as I know, he never mugged anybody," he said.

"All right," said Sim. He just didn't want to argue. The question of whether or not to hire the guide had been dumped from its priority; what was making him seethe now was Suley's dangerously offhand discussion of what it was they were carrying.

III

Hennessee trotted to the and of the

horse they biked.

Neither Suley nor Sim had quite reckoned with the problems of bicycling in New York City in July, howavar.

Their shadow cloaks kept getting mixed up with the fast on the pedals, and the heat was really oppressive, a dank, solid sort of swelter, quite unlike the bright Arizona fire. "I don't know if we can keep up with you, old man," Sim gasped after the first few blocks, and Harvey slowed down.

"This," he said, as though he were reading from prompt cards, "is Thirty-Fourth Street. There is your Empira

CAPTAIN CLARK OF THE SPACE PATROL

BY RAY RUSSELL

The following quartet of miniature tales was recently discovered by me in an old yellow binder dating back to my elementary school days. I must have been about nine or ten when I wrote them, on lined two-hole loose-leaf paper, in black ink. (Anyone out there remember ink? It came in "bottles" into which we dipped the "nibs" of our primitive "pens.") All four of the stories feature the same character, Captain Clark of the Space Patrol. Some of my friends claim they can see the faint beginnings of my later style in these examples of juvenilia; other friends assure me there has been no change whatsoever. All I will say is that I've encountered science fiction a lot worse, written far more recently, by professionals much older than this pre-pubescent author—particularly on television, but not exclusively in that medium. I offer the stories without further comment, exactly as written, complete with howlers.

—R. R.

A REAL PATROLMAN

Captain Kane Clark of the Space Patrol was sitting in front of the Patrol's headquarters when Dick Lee, a little friend of his came up to him.

"Hello, captain!" he said.

"How are you, Dick?" asked Clark.

"Oh, fine. Who's that man over there?" asked Dick, pointing out an elderly looking man, with thick glasses and a trim cut goatee.

"Why, that's Doctor Emanuel Shard—our crime detection scientist. Swell guy."

Dick appeared doubtful, and when Captain Clark left, he went to the building which held the crime detection laboratory, and went to Shard's office.

Shard wasn't in his office, but Dick found him in the laboratory.

"Hello, Doctor Shard—oh, what are you doing? Listening in on the secret wave length? Don't do that!"

That was precisely what Shard WAS doing. He dropped his earphone, and wheeled around. "You meddlesome baby!" he screeched. "I'll kill you for that! Spying, eh?" And he pulled out a deadly D-ray gun—pressed the trigger.

The wall in back of the boy melted to nothingness, for he had jumped away. "Missed!" yelled Dick, running down the corridor.

He reached a radiophone on a wall, and cried into it: "Operator, connect me with helmetphone number 279-B—quickly!" The connection was made, and Captain Kane Clark's voice sounded in the loudspeaker.

"Who is calling?"

"It's me, captain—Dickie! Come to

level A-22—now! It's about Shard—but hurry!"

In fifteen seconds Clark stepped from an elevator, and stood beside the boy. "What is it, Dickie?"

"It's that Doctor Shard! He was listening on the secret wave—and tried to D-ray me, end—"

"What?" screamed Clark. "The filthy skunk! When I get him—"

They caught Shard, just as he was about to escape via the window.

Captain Clark hissed at Shard: "You'll get at least ten years on Ceres for this." Then, turning to Dickie, he said, "My boy, you certainly are a REAL PATROLMAN!"

ON THE TRAIL OF DOCTOR SHARD

Captain Kane Clark entered the office of his superior, Commander Norton.

"You sent for me sir?" asked the little young captain.

"Yes, Clark. Doctor Shard has escaped from Ceres, the prison planetoid. Start for Ceres at once!"

Without further ado, Clark hired a space ship, and shot away from the Earth.

Two days later found him peering through his super lens telescopic periscope.

"Swirling Suns! That's a Ceres patrol ship up ahead—but, God, how fast it's moving! I had better investigate."

Turning his ship, he swung majestically over the Ceres ship, and, donning a space suit, climbed from the air lock onto the speedily moving ship from the prison planet.

Squinting through the quartz-glass windows of his helmet, and of the ship, he saw a man, dressed in a dull blue cloth, bending over the control panel. The man's face was clearly visible to Clark.

"Doctor Shard!" he breathed.

Quickly he whipped a D-ray gun from its holster, and melted the quartz-glass porthole away.

Doctor Shard turned at the sound; saw Kane Clark's grim visaged face through the helmet.

He took a deep breath—then gasped—the terrible realization came to him—all the air had rushed out into the empty vacuum of outer space, when Captain Clark had melted away the window!

Shard stumbled weakly toward a cabinet, and withdrew a helmet and a D-ray gun. He put on the helmet.

Through Kane Clark's earphones, rasped: "Don't move, Clark—I have you covered!"

And Shard's earphones roared: "Oh, yeah? Say any prayers your miserable

soul knows, you bloodthirsty fiend—because you're going to die—here and now!"

From the captain's D-ray gun came a barrage of pure white flame. It struck Shard, he gasped, screamed, and, in a few seconds, was a pile of unwholesome ashes.

"A fitting end for a heartless rat!" said Captain Clark to himself.

PIRATES OF SPACE

"Remain quiet, and you shall be unharmed. Make a sound, and I'll burn you to a cinder!"

It was Duval, the space pirate, commanding the passengers of the rocket liner, "Bluestreak."

His men searched the passengers and their cabins, then reported to Duval, "We cannot find the Moonstone crystal, sir—but we have this loot." The man showed Duval a box, filled with priceless jewels.

"Bah!" he yelled. "I must have the Moonstone, and by the nine moons of Saturn—I'll get it!"

Now, it so happened that Interplanetary Rocket Lines, owners of the "Bluestreak" had assigned a government agent, Captain Kane Clark, of the Space Patrol, to guard the precious Moonstone crystal.

Clark was disguised as an elderly man, and was on the ship. He rose from his seat, and faced Duval.

"Sir," he said, "I am in charge of the priceless jewel you have just mentioned. I will give it to you if you let the ship go peacefully on its way."

The Moonstone crystals were mined frequently from the crystal mines of the Moon, but this particular one had a strange difference—it was rich in radium! Moon radium, the most rare and deadly of elements!

Duval said, "Very well, old man, give me the Moonstone, and I'll leave you in peace. But mind you, it must be the REAL Moonstone!"

"It will be," said the disguised Clark, "no worry of that."

Captain Clark fumbled in a box, and withdrew a heavy lead container. This he handed to Duval.

"Is this the genuine article?" asked the wily space pirate.

"Of course it is," replied Clark, "see for yourself."

Duval opened the leaden container, and gazed at the shining jewel within. Then he screamed, slapped down the lid, dropped the container, and covered his eyes with his hands. "I'm blinded!" he screamed. "That cursed Moonstone!"

"Yes, Duval," said Kane Clark, removing his disguise. "The radium ele-

ment in the Moonstone blinded you. You'll find it's not safe to play the game of crime when the Space Patrol is around!"

SENTENCED BY THE LAW

Jon Duval, former space pirate was in the Court of Ceres, the prison planetoid. A week before, he had been blinded by a radium Moonstone. It was a trick on the part of Captain Kane Clark of the Space Patrol.

The judge looked down at the sightless prisoner, and said, "Jon Duval, this court has found you guilty of twenty-five robberies and seven first degree murders. Therefore, I sentence you to death by the D-ray, one month from this day, at midnight. Next case!"

Duval was led away.

Heavy, unseen days rolled slowly by. Always, in his mind, he pictured that fatal moment when he opened the lead container of the Moonstone crystal, and the radium rays burned into his eyes; rendered them useless.

A month passed. At 11:30 at night, a guard and a priest entered Duval's gloomy cell. He was to begin the long walk toward the dread room where he would be D-rayed to death.

They started. As they walked, instead of a repentance for his sins coming over him, an intense hatred welled up within him. Hatred for—Captain Kane Clark!

As a ruse, Duval slumped to the floor. The guard bent to lift him up. As Duval was being lifted, he felt for the guard's D-ray gun—and found it!

Instantly he destroyed every thing around him! He stumbled blindly through the corridor.

An alarm rang out. Clark, who was on special duty at the Ceres prison, was notified immediately.

"Captain Clark—Jon Duval has escaped!"

Clark went after Duval, and found him, outside the prison, running madly. "Stop, Duval!" yelled Kane Clark.

"Clark!" screamed the blinded convict. He wheeled about. "It would be terrible to live with my eyes burned out—I'll kill myself—but I'll kill YOU first, Clark!"

Surmising where the patrolman was, by the sound of his voice, Duval leveled his weapon, and—fired!

But his "aim" was poor. However, Clark choked and screamed, to deceive him.

Duval then turned the gun toward himself, and squeezed the trigger. The flame consumed him.

Clark glanced at his watch. "Twelve o'clock," he murmured. "The sentence was carried out—Duval died at midnight—by D-ray!" ★

Bind Your Sons to Exile

BY JERRY POURNELLE

they were ready, but the emotional impact of what they were about to do was much bigger than they had thought it would be.

They were dressed nearly identically: reflective coveralls over a finely weaved skin-tight bodystocking. Their tool belts were mostly new and stiff, the tools shiny and unused. None of them wore spectacles, and most shielded their eyes with uplifted hands. The sun glared brightly off the bay to one side and the desert to the other.

A group of four sat at the end of the

Heat rose in dry waves from the black asphalt surface. The cooling trade wind carried dust and clouds of bright yellow butterflies. They fluttered in confusion, vainly trying to find vegetation or moisture among the low concrete buildings of the spaceport; eventually they died and their dessicated bodies added to the blowing dust.

A dozen bright steel rails ran from the asphalt into the blue waters of Bahía de la Paz. The monstrous fletcher that spanned the rails was so large that it couldn't be taken seriously; it looked like an advertising stunt for a toy company. The stubby-winged spacecraft sitting atop the rail car added to the illusion that this was a toy, or a set for a television show; it was just too large to be real.

The spacecraft was set onto a launching platform and the rail car withdrew. White plumes of condensing vapor blew off the fueling lines. Deflector shields were lowered into place. It would have been obvious that the shuttlecraft was about to launch even if a warning horn had not sounded across the field.

An open jitney bus purred across the asphalt. It plunged into the swarms of butterflies at too low a speed to splatter them on the windscreen, but it moved fast enough to send numbers of them careening onto the pavement, so that it left a trail of feebly fluttering insects in its wake. The driver sang softly in the Baja patois, part Spanish and part Indian. He wore a wide hand-tooled belt with an enormous silver buckle. His father had been a peon who had never in his life seen as much money as went to buy that belt.

A dozen young women and nearly three times that number of young men sat facing sideways on the jitney. They spoke in cheerful tones. Most elaborately ignored the spacecraft ahead of them, pretending a boredom that they didn't feel. They had been preparing for this moment for four years and more, but few had ever been into orbit before; and the growing bulk of the shuttle cast its shadow across them. Intellectually



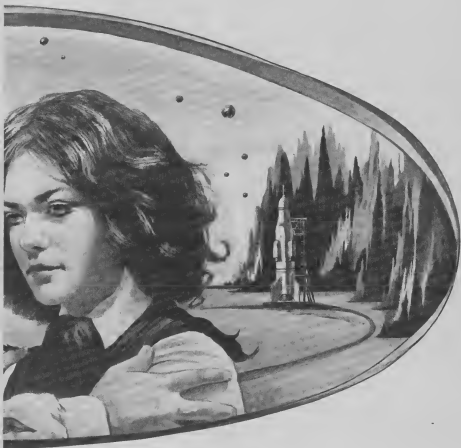
jitney. Although all were pressed closely together, these seemed somehow set apart from the others. Their tool belts were oil-stained, and their coveralls did not have the creased stiffness that garments have only once in their lives. Of these four, one seemed more alone than the rest. That no longer concerned him; he rarely thought of his isolation from his peers, and when he did he thrust the thought away down into his subconscious. Bill Jack Shipton had never made friends easily, and his attitude, far more than

his origins, had kept him from forming close ties with his classmates at Cal Tech.

He was both analytical and introspective, and he knew he could have had friends. They would have accepted him if only from politeness. It was one more reason why he desperately wanted to be a part of their world; but he was afraid of rejection, and even more afraid of being tolerated. He wanted acceptance as a matter of right, something earned rather than granted, and until he had earned his way he told himself he

was content to be alone. He had never liked people who spent income they did not yet have, or who claimed credit for jobs they had not finished. Potential was nothing; only accomplishments counted.

The jitney stopped at the entryway to the shuttlecraft, and the group excitedly darted up the steep ramp. The others had said their goodbyes back at the debarkation center; now Bill Jack paused half-way up the ramp to say his own. There was no one out there, and no one who would care; but he whis-



perped a silent farewell to Earth and the life he had won his way out of.

"I'll be back," he whispered. Ten years, and I'll be back, nch. The San Gabriel Valley Community Project was far to the north beyond the scrubby desert shrubs and tall cardones cactus of Baja, but it was real in his mind: a rabbit warren of stinking concrete corridors filled with hopeless people; concrete towers stuffed with hopeless youths who made life miserable for anyone who wanted out. Gangs and wanton violence, cheap thrills, drugs, theft, rape, and casual murder; fear of the police, fear of neighbors, fear that the government would cease to support them; goodbye to that, Bill Jack thought. I'll be back, but to La Canada, not to San Gabriel over again.

"Bill—"
He turned with a grimace. She knew he liked to be called "Will" or "William". The name on his birth certificate was "Bill Jack", not "William John", and that said everything about his mother; she thought so little of his chances that she hadn't even given him a name he could bear with dignity.

"Bill, come on—"
The girl was not pretty. She was not offensively ugly, merely plain. She was not awkward or clumsy, merely graceless. She came back down the ramp. "Come on, we can't keep the shuttle waiting." She took his hand and smiled gently as she led him up into the ship. He followed without resistance. They took seats together and listened as the Captain gave final instructions.

"Good Morning. I am Captain Haney," she said. She was tall and slim and self-assured, her dark hair cut short but plainly feminine. She was the kind of woman that Bill Jack had always wanted to know, although he had never met any because he was afraid of rebuff. One day, he thought; and not so very long now.

"Be sure that all zippers are closed on your pressure suits," Captain Haney said. "This isn't an airliner even if it looks like one in here." The passengers gave short nervous laughs. "There are helmets under your seats. In the very unlikely event of depressurization, expell all air in your lungs. Do not attempt to hold your breath. Then carefully take the helmet out of its container and dog it onto your neck seal. Pressure will be automatic when the helmets are properly fastened."

Bill Jack only half listened. They had all been through pressure suit training. A few had been in orbit before. Certainly Bill Jack had; his contract with Space Industries required him to work summers in their orbital factory complex. It had been pleasant work, and Bill had enjoyed his status. Student engineers were respected, and ranked

higher than the permanent mechanics and technicians even if they were not paid very much.

The suit felt good beneath his reflective coveralls. It was tight, like a diver's wet suit, but far more comfortable because it was porous. The suit was a thin web of nylon and steel threads which reinforced his own skin so that, with pressure in an attached helmet, he could live in vacuum. The helmet under the seat was part of the shuttlecraft equipment, but the suit was his own, a final gift of SI when he graduated from Cal Tech. He wished he had his own helmet as well, but that was packed with his other gear in the shuttle's baggage compartment. His helmet was a handsome piece of workmanship, with integral radios and lights and water-bottle attachment. SI didn't skimp on equipment, and he had better gear than many of his wealthy classmates had bought for themselves.

Captain Haney finished her spiel and went forward to the control cabin. The passengers buckled their lap belts and shoulder harnesses. The First Officer went carefully from seat to seat making sure they'd done it right. He took his duties seriously. United had never had a space fatality and the crewman who allowed the first would be a marked man.

Caroline Riley reached over to adjust Bill's shoulder straps. She fiked doing things for him, although she was never sure how he would react. Sometimes it made him angry, but she didn't care. At least he noticed her. She took his hand and squeezed nervously. His response was automatic, with no feeling in it, but she was used to that. At least, she thought, I have this much of him, for a little while more.

This would be her second trip riding the remjet up out of Baja, and she wasn't frightened; but she envied Bill Jack's calm acceptance. His eyes were fixed on something a long way outside the spacecraft. Probably San Gabriel, she thought. He was haunted by that place.

They had met at Cal Tech, at the orientation meeting for Space Industries contract students. There had been a score of them at the meeting; now there were only four left, and they had different assignments, each to go a separate way. The shuttle gave off strange noises, and Caroline gulped hard, trying, like the others, not to show any fear or nervousness. A line from some stand-up comic came into her head. "You sit on the airliner reading a magazine and smiling, but it's sweaty palms all the way..." And that was true enough. But Bill's not sweating at all. Of course he's made the trip five times now, he's an old hand. He wasn't always so quiet...

They'd roomed together at Cal Tech. The classes were difficult, especially for the SI students who were under enormous pressure to keep up their grade points, and it had seemed an easy solution to the problem of social life and biological pressures. They would only be friends and roommates, no possessiveness and no emotional involvements. He'd been honest enough with her. He liked her but she did not fit his plans for the future; she couldn't, because she came from another rabbit warren project, and her family was welfare like his. Her origins were an impossible barrier to anything more than friendship with Bill Jack Shipton. She'd known that and accepted it long before he told her why.

They'd just finished their first year's exams, and although the grades hadn't been listed they knew they'd done well. To celebrate they'd gone to a concert at Beckman. Bill obviously hadn't liked the music, but he sat quietly, desperately trying to enjoy himself; and afterwards they'd finished a bottle of bourbon together while she tried to understand.

"It was my twelfth birthday," he'd told her. "The social worker had a cousin who was active in the Big Brothers, and took me up to her cousin's house. It was a big place, all white with red tile roofs, up on a hill in La Cañada. The view was terrific. It looked out across the Pasadena smog all the way to the coast. San Gabriel was an ugly smear off to one side, not really very big at all. I was surprised at that because I thought that goddam place was the whole world."

"I'd seen houses like that on TV, but they weren't real, they were just for actors. Nobody you knew lived like that. Only this was real. Three bathrooms. The faucet handles in one of them were shaped like cats' heads. In San Gabriel you had to take a pair of pliers to the can because somebody always stole the faucet handles."

"They had books, and rugs, and everything was clean, and it wasn't a TV trick, they really lived that way. They were so damned nice! Bill Lincoln had been around, but Mrs. Lincoln had never seen anybody like me. She'd always lived in a big clean house, but goddam she was nice to me! Made me feel comfortable, like I belonged there."

He'd told her a lot more, and Caroline could guess the rest. We're so much alike, she thought. Pink monkeys in a world of brown ones. But Bill wants to paint himself brown. He thinks he can, that all the browns are down in welfare.

There were warning tones, and a ready light flashed at the front of the passenger compartment.

We're really going, Caroline thought. We really are. Eight years of work, for



both of us. We really are alike. We both got the idea of getting into something better. We both knew we'd never make it any way but with our brains, and we both knew we weren't like the people around us. We went to the same libraries, and it's a wonder we didn't run into each other when we were twelve or thirteen years old. I wish we had.

The ship tilted vertically until they were lying on their backs. There was another wait, less than a minute in real time, but it seemed hours. Bill Jack became aware that Caroline was holding her breath, and he gave her hand a gentle squeeze.

I should be in love with her, he thought. She was nearly the only friend he had, and certainly the only lover. She worked hard at keeping him out of the fits of depression that too often came over him. They were sexually compatible. I warned her, he thought. I told her she didn't fit into my plans.

By now he knew the image he'd carried since he was 12 was a false one; but he'd had it too many years to discard it. He would make it come true. He deserved that. The years of study on his own, because the San Gabriel schools were useless, filled with time-serving teachers who cared only for quiet in the classrooms and a minimum of work; and after the National Merit Examination when he was 14, there'd been the other school, across town, a middle-class school filled with the kind of people he wanted to be and wasn't. They might have made friends but he wouldn't chance it; instead he studied their ways until he could ape their manners.

The engines roared. For a moment there was nothing more, only the terrible sound of the engines, then the ship lifted and they were pressed down into their seats. That went on for a long time, then came the lurch as the upper vehicle separated from the atmospheric ramjet that carried it aloft. There was a moment of weightlessness, marked by chatter from the passengers who'd never felt it before, then more acceleration until the Earth and its atmosphere were left behind.

Bill looked across Caroline and through the tiny viewport. Baja lay spread out below, dark land standing out from the grey Pacific and bright blue Sea of Cortez. There were almost no clouds over the peninsula's thousand and more miles. Los Angeles was out of his field of view, but he didn't care. He had no need for a last look at San Gabriel.

That's it, Bill Jack thought. Nine years, and I've made it. When I come back it's all going to be different. I've made it. Farewell, Earth. For a while. I'll be back.

To get to the Belt you must first build

your own ship. We worked on her for three months. Of course most of the orbital assembly had been done before we got to the satellite complex, but Space Industries wants to be sure the crew know the ship before starting out. The trip out is nearly the worst thing about the Belt.

It takes over 12,000 hours, nearly 18 months Earth time, and there's not much to do on the way. I kept telling myself it wasn't so bad. I had it easier than those poor blokes on sailing ships ever did. They had storms and scurvy and they were wet all the time. They had the sea, but I had all the stars in the universe, rivers of stars, stars without number, and no atmosphere to get in their way.

But the old sailors tired of the beauties of the sea, and it wasn't long before I was sick of the stars.

We had other compensations. I had my choice of more than a hundred programmed learning courses I could take. Foreign languages, ancient history, higher math for amusement; I got a master's in engineering for professional work; I studied up on mining and manufacturing in space. It was all there, anything I wanted. Information stored in holographic chips doesn't mass very much, and if there was anything else one of us wanted they'd beam out a program from Earth. They even sent ball games and movies.

There was also the work. Nothing on the ship was automated. Any job that a human could do, we did for ourselves. Of course we could get clever and build automatic systems, and we did, but that took up time. The ships are designed that way. Space Industries doesn't want its people going stir crazy on the way out. They have too much money tied up in us. Coming back they wouldn't care.

The hardest part is other people. There were thirty-two aboard our ship. Thirty-four when we started, but two didn't make it; murder-suicide. It's a wonder there wasn't more of that. It's easy enough to hate someone you can't avoid. We had mixed sexes, but that didn't help as much as the psych boys thought it would. There were times when I thought it would be better to have enforced celibacy. I'd left my girl—well, my college roommate—back in Earth orbit, and by the time I got over wishing she'd come along, most of the women aboard had sorted themselves into reasonably permanent arrangements—without me. We had seven married couples aboard, five completely so. The other two slept around, an arrangement I got into a couple of times, but there was no satisfaction other than hydrostatic. I might as well have made out with a prostitute. In fact, I wished we'd had a

couple of honest whores aboard.

Then there was privacy. We didn't have much. Each of us had a compartment about the size of a bunk. The partitions were as thin as they could make them. No soundproofing. If we wanted quiet, we wore earphones. Not earplugs—there were times when we needed to hear what was happening and hear it fast. Otherwise we wouldn't live to enjoy the privacy.

There were stresses in plenty—and yet there weren't as many as people live with every day on Earth. The overcrowding was nothing new to me—even a bunk sized thin-wall compartment was more privacy than any of us had in San Gabriel Development. We weren't going to be mugged or robbed. We had one murder the whole trip: I remember a week when I was eleven years old in San Gabriel, and there were nine murders in our lower alone. Space has its dangers, but they're predictable, or if not predictable, understandable. You can't be filled with helpless rage when the Sun flares and everyone has to huddle into the "storm cellar" shielded area among the fuel tanks. In space you don't spend your whole life feeling helpless; there's something you can do about your problems.

It wasn't easy, but we got there, and considering that none of us had any deep space experience that's an accomplishment all by itself. Seventeen months after we left Earth orbit we matched velocities with *Moria*. It wasn't much of a place to be. We parked about a kilometer from the rock. *Moria* looked impressively big, like a mountain torn off the Earth and flung up into the sky. It had no real shape: rugged peaks sticking up all over, and big cracks running through them.

Over at one edge there was an enormous rock, maybe a half kilometer in diameter. It sat on *Moria*, or I suppose you could say that *Moria* sat on it; anyway the two rocks had collided with just enough force that they stuck together.

I could spout all the statistics from memory. *Moria*: first inhabited asteroid. Mining colony. Average distance from the Sun, 2.39 AU, or 357 million kilometers. Irregular shape. Average radius, 7.5 kilometers, minimum 4, maximum 11 km. Mass, 1.78 trillion tons, or about one ten-billionth of Earth mass. Rotation period 8.2 hours. Period, 3.69 Earth years, or 1348.6 Earth days, or 3947 local "days". Surface gravity, 0.2 cm/sec², two ten-thousandths of an Earth gee, just enough to keep you from jumping off the place.

If you jumped as hard as you could you'd go up a couple of kilometers, and take hours for the round trip. It wouldn't

be a smart thing to do.

Composition, varied, with plenty of veins of metals. Moria was once part of a much bigger rock, one big enough to have had a molten core. Then it got bettered to hell and gone, exposing what had been the interior. Now you can mine: magnesium, uranium, iron, aluminum, and nickel. There's gold and silver. There's also water and ammonia ices under the surface, which are a hell of a lot more important than the metals. Or are they? Without the metals we wouldn't be out here. Without the ices we couldn't stay.

There were men coming up from the rock. Some took scooters: a rocket motor with a saddle on it. No enclosure. Their suits were all the cabin they had.

A couple of dudes just plain jumped. I supposed they must have had some kind of backpack reaction systems, because they came pretty fast, but it looked like they'd jumped. It would be possible, I told myself. But it wasn't a stunt I was anxious to try.

The airlock cycled and three of them came aboard. They didn't waste any words on welcome. One of them opened his helmet and shouted, "Ship-ton? William Shipton?"

"That's me," I admitted.

"Dorrington. I relieve you, sir. Please get everyone into their helmets. We've got transportation. I assume you have an anchor watch set up?"

"I'd intended to take that myself," said.

"Appoint someone else. The skipper wants to see you. OK, OK, let's get with it."

You'd think that after all the time we'd spent getting to Moria we'd be anxious to get into the rock. I suppose we were, but we'd got out of the habit of doing anything that wasn't part of our routine. It took me a moment to get organized while Dorrington fumed. I asked Hal Williams to stay aboard. He'd been First Officer for the trip and knew the ship as well as anyone aboard. Then I mumbled something about our gear.

"We'll bring the gear down," Dorrington said. "Come on, let's get it together."

I herded our people out through the airlock. They were mostly older than me. I'd been Captain because I'd had a few months orbital experience and I was a graduate engineer. That made me the best man for the job. When I got the others outside I closed my faceplate and tested the pressurization, then followed them out.

Outside is outside. I'd been out a lot during the trip. Nothing had changed. The Sun was much smaller than it had been when we were closer to Earth, but it was too bright to look at. Jupiter blazed off the port bow, brighter than any star I'd ever seen. My skin felt

puffed up and there were a couple of wrinkles in my sunlight that I hadn't adjusted. They hurt.

There was a big scooter out there. It had seats for forty or more. A crewman motioned me to a saddle and pointed to the straps. He didn't bother to find my frequency and talk to me. Or maybe he had the wrong one. Or I did. None of the crew seemed to talk very much, and when they did it was mostly to give commands.

The pilot took his seat and we started moving. After a second it didn't feel like we were moving at all; it looked as if the rock were growing. Moria got bigger and bigger until it filled the sky, and suddenly it wasn't a rock floating above me but something we could really land on. Moria was incredibly rugged, worse than it had looked from a kilometer. There were boulders and craters and everything was cracked with sharp edges. No weathering. No weather. Veins stood out in clear lines running across the cliff faces.

The scooter braked at the surface and we set down in a little cleared flat area not much bigger than a football field. There were cliffs sticking straight up all around. They were high, half a kilometer or more, and it was hard to realize that if I wanted to I could jump to the top.

The sun was almost directly overhead. Shadows were like shadows always are in space, sharp, no fuzzy edges, and everything not in direct sunlight was as black as the inside of a cow. There was a lighted cave just in front of us. The pilot waved us to it.

We were comical. We'd got used to no gravity at all, then when we matched orbits with Moria we'd had a hundred times the acceleration this rock gave. Now we'd have to learn to get around all over again. Some of us tried to dive horizontally and misjudged, ending up on our noses in the dirt. A couple tried to walk and that didn't work out too well either. One man jumped forty feet high and took a whole minute to come down. The pilot made a single leap, like a kangaroo, and reached the cave in one jump. It took me two falls and a splat against the cliff face to get there.

There was an airlock inside the cave, and through that was a corridor maybe four meters wide. It was lit by fluorescent sets too far apart. The pilot glanced at a telltale and opened his faceplate. When he didn't keel over I opened my own, and then the rest unbuttoned.

"—be wanted in the main assembly room," the pilot was saying. "Over there." He pointed to a cross corridor.

We trooped along, not saying much. We'd lived together too long, so there wasn't a lot left to say. A few had made some really close friendships, but not

me. I've always been something of a loner. Besides, there was the command bit: I couldn't afford to have close buddies or somebody would accuse me of favoritism. They did anyway.

The corridors were bare rock. Well, not bare: they had been sprayed with some kind of varnish as an air seal. The rock had a lot of color in it, and there were veins. One looked like gold. Real gold. Well, you can't eat or breathe the stuff.

There was an airlock at the end of the corridor. It was a crude slab of cast iron with milled surfaces only where it sealed. Through that was a cavern maybe fifty meters across and nearly that high. There were a few stone benches and tables on the floor.

I had to laugh. There were niches carved all over the walls, all the way to the top, and people were perched in them like bats. I saw an empty niche and thought it over for a second, then tried a jump. I gauged it well enough to grab the hand-hold. There was a piece of line attached to the rock, and I tied that across my waist so I wouldn't drift off.

There were a couple of dozen station regulars perched on the walls. They stank. Well, so did we, and so did the station, and so had the ship. All the stinks were different. It's amazing how many ways things can smell bad. When everything's recycled, you just can't get all the gunk out of the air and water. Not all of it. There are always a few molecules left, and the human nose is an amazingly sensitive instrument.

About half the station personnel were missing something: fingers, an arm, a leg, one eye, one chap was missing one of each. They didn't say anything to us.

Sure make us feel welcome, I thought. Greenhorns are fair game everywhere, but it can be carried too far.

Another man came into the chamber. His coveralls were a bit cleaner than most, although just barely. He wore three black bands at the ends of his sleeves. The fabulous Commander Ulysses John Wiley, who'd discovered this rock and camped on it until they'd sent him additional crew. He'd built this place and was nearly its absolute master. I'd heard a dozen stories about him.

"I'm Wiley," he said. His voice carried easily through the big rock chamber. "You've been studying tapes of this operation for damned near a year, so you think you know all about it. You don't. You don't know what work is, either, but you will."

"We worked our asses off in the ship." That had to be Fran Lyle, one of the permanently married women. She wasn't a bad sort, but touchy.

I was curious to know how Wiley

(Continued on page 72)

Beneath the Hills of Azlaroc

BY FRED SABERHAGEN

His name was Francisco Sorokin, and he had walked on the surface of a neutron star. Or so he said, when he reappeared in the nameless city, the only place that could be called a city on the strange world of Azlaroc.

"You expect anyone to believe that?" Miletus Milibrae scoffed; he recognized Sorokin, knew him slightly, felt contempt for him as a harmless braggart and a vagabond, a quack anchorite who spent about half his time in the remote mathematical deserts of the world and the other half in town convincing tourists that he was a mysterious and romantic figure. It was quite possibly true that he knew more about the deserts than did any other man.

Sorokin gave a slight I-don't-care - if - you - believe - me - or - not gesture, the equivalent of a shrug, and stood before a slab of polished wood imported at great cost, pondering the bartender's recent automatic query as to what he would like to have. At the moment he and Milibrae were the tavern's only customers.

The gesture of indifference had been not very convincing. Milibrae thought; he would have expected that a man like Sorokin could do better. Milibrae studied the other's face, which he was able to do readily enough because they were near-contemporaries on Azlaroc, each of them having settled here about fifty years ago.

"Brandy, Year '475," Milibrae ordered.

The bartender was no machine, but a man who evidently liked the work, and like most human bartenders, a recent settler. As a comparative newcomer he could of course converse more readily with the tourists who made up a large part of his trade. This year's tourists, whom Milibrae saw through about fifty veils, were blurred enough to him to make recognition of facial features difficult. "Sorry, sir, we seem to be out. We're getting a liquor shipment from Recycling in about eight hours, so if you'd care to try tonight or tomorrow . . . meanwhile I can offer '476."

"Bah. I have no urge to swallow silk, just to be sociable. My bloodstream cries for booze." Of course only one veil lay between '475 and '476, but to a stomach of the wrong yeargroup the stuff would be completely inert.

"I'll take a shot of that '476. My very year." Sorokin turned around, leaning with his elbows on the bar, looking somehow bigger and more formidable than before. "Do you don't believe me. Well, I suppose I've cried wolf far too often." A single point of light from the one veil that lay between them made a small sparkle at his elbow.

"Wolf?"

"An old story," Sorokin looked off into space.

This performance is getting better, Millbrae thought to himself. "What have you for '475?" he asked the bartender.

The man tapped a button for an inventory readout. "Whisky. Bhang. Schnapps. Rum..."

"Something with rum in it. Very cold." Hoping for amusement, Millbrae looked back at Sorokin, and made his own expression one of interest with just the right amount of doubt. "So tell me about walking on the neutron star."

Sorokin smacked his lips over his brandy of '478. "Still tastes good. I'll tell you first a name, and then perhaps you'll be willing to believe the rest."

An old settler passed, a man or woman from hundreds of years ago, so far warped by hundreds of veils from Sorokin's and Millbrae's shared reality that he—or she was little more than a drift of visible vibrations in the air, whose zone of passage included the corner of Millbrae's modern table without in the least disturbing the simultaneous arrival of his rum drink. An old-settler bartender, or more probably a machine of that era, came in the form of a similar blur to take his order across the ancient, polished wood. No questions of communication with the three men already there; from their viewpoint, no one had really entered.

"A name?" Millbrae maintained his cultivated expression, but suddenly he thought he knew the name; it was the beginning of an awesome understanding. More people were coming into the tavern now, tourists or recent settlers, laughing. Their voices were slurred in Millbrae's ears but still intelligible.

"Ramachandra," said Sorokin. And though he had not spoken the name loudly, the happy group who had just entered were silent instantly. The contemporaneous bartender raised his head and then ceased to move, and all of them for a moment were quiet as statuary.

It had been nearly an Azlarcean year earlier, one fewer veil draped upon them all, when Sorokin with his own hands had given the box to Ramachandra. It was a small black rhomboid box with sides of unequal size, and Sorokin had clung to it like a fanatic while passing secretaries, bodyguards, and functionaries of unknown function that the wealthy recluse had gathered about himself. Sorokin had sent word of his find ahead, and when he finally confronted Ramachandra himself in one of the city's typical underground apartments, the potentate leaned forward in his throne-like chair, said, "Well?" and held out his hand.

Half a dozen others had recently made the same gesture, almost as imperiously but in vain. This time Sorokin honored it, handing over the heavy black metal case, which was just about big enough to have contained a human heart or brain.

One of the many chamberlains nearby made a disgusted sound as soon as he got a good look at the box. "Not even the right size or shape. Is it even a message carrier?"

Ramachandra raised three imperious fingers. "Beside the distorted nameplate on this device is a mark that seems identical to one I put secretly on each unit that we sent out with the robots. Callisto? Come here and look. Could the very shape of the box have been changed? I see no sign that it's been crushed."

The woman called Callisto was either a tourist or a very new settler, for the details of her face and garments were somewhat blurred in Sorokin's vision by his veils; while Ramachandra himself seemed to belong to Sorokin's own yeargroup of settlers, or to one very near to it in time, for they could behold each other with perfect clarity.

Callisto was tall, and like most of the people to be seen on Azlaroc, of youthful bearing but indeterminate age. Now she was looking closely at the box as Ramachandra continued to turn it over in his brown, bejeweled, and powerful-seeming hands. "Sir," she said finally, "I had not foreseen that its very shape might change, that it might carry back some residual alteration in the space within its atoms or its molecules. But I cannot say that such a change should be impossible." She lifted black veiled eyes to Sorokin. "Where did you find this thing?"

"Along the peak of Ruler Ridge. Some twenty or twenty-two kilometers to the south of here."

"Which side of the ridge? And how near the top?" Callisto asked him sharply.

"The east side, toward the city, midday." There was some mockery perhaps in the honorific form of address. "And it was embedded in the ground not half a meter from the top. Just about half of the box was showing, fortunately with the little nameplate clear: 'Finder please return to Rama—'" Ramachandra himself cut in: "They tell me you are always finding or reporting mysterious things out in the desert. Have you reported this to anyone else?"

"I have not. As for my finding and seeing and knowing other things out there, why I suppose I'm there more than anyone else, except perhaps some of the original settlers."

"Are you amenable to being hired?" the man on the throne-chair asked. He named a sum that was half again as much as most jobs paid. "Plus food and quarters here in my suite as long as you're employed, which will be for an indefinite period."

"My duties?"

"Consultant. On the desert and its topography and its wonders, shall we say?" Ramachandra's voice was dry. "I shall require that you remain usually in my suite, and communicate with the outside only as I direct, while you are in my employ. Can you start at once?"

Sorokin appeared to take thought. "I can."

"Good. Now let's see what our message carrier holds."

One of Ramachandra's male aides was already leading a machine into the room. At a nod from his employer he tapped out on its input DAMAGED RECORDER/MESSAGE CARRIER TO BE READ, and then he took the black device from Ramachandra's hand and gave it to the hand-like grippers of the machine.

"Everyone out of the room, please." Ramachandra had raised his voice slightly. "Except you, Callisto, I'll want your opinion." His eyes swiveled to Sorokin. "And you stay too. If this thing proves not to be authentic I'll want you right on hand."

For what? Sorokin wondered uneasily. He had heard some strange stories about Ramachandra, who was a little-known man among Azlaroc's small permanent population though he had been a settler here now for some fifty years. There were hints of violence in the stories, and more than hints of eccentricity. But Sorokin made no protest now, only took a seat at the powerful man's right hand while Callisto sat just as formally at his left.

The machine was now ready to display the contents of the message carrier, and it dimmed the ambient lighting and began to project a hologram into the middle of the room. The indoor space faced by the three seated people seemed to disappear, and they saw before them the desert, utterly lifeless. Not pure yellow as was the desert immediately surrounding the city, nor mottled gold and pink as on the high land of Ruler Ridge, but pale orange and mauve, as Sorokin had often seen it in the depression on the city's other side. Ten or twelve thousand kilometers from the city in that direction the land began to run under blackish, the sky of darkness, and into the uninhabitable zone.

Two people, Ramachandra and Callisto, were foreground in the hologram, standing a few paces from the camera

that had recorded it and looking toward the camera, which was evidently supported by some person—no, Ramachandra had mentioned robots, hadn't he?—that was sinking slowly into the ground. With their eyes fixed studiously on a point near Sorokin, the images of Callisto and Ramachandra slid slowly upward, and the orange and mauve surface of the world rose too.

Beginning in the extreme foreground of the image and zigzagging off between mathematical hills, to vanish at last in the far background beneath the blacksky zone, ran what might, on some more ordinary world, have been taken for a dried out watercourse. On some planet where it could rain and conditions were halfway reasonable for men to dwell, or even on some world where clouds dripped liquid lead to burn out channels in the landscape, the great crack might have been taken for a narrow, desiccated gully.

But on mild Azlaroc it never rained, not even liquid lead. This purple-bottomed ditch into which the robot sank (By all the veils, Sorokin hoped it was a robot not a human!) was made not by erosion but by subduction, the slow infolding of the outer surface of the world down into unexplored depths beneath.

Men had not dug too deeply here, because they feared to break a balance of natural forces. Azlaroc was not a planet, and what lay beneath its crust was no mere molten rock. This world had a unique constitution, containing types of matter unknown elsewhere. It had a star-like mass, but zones of natural gravity inversion that had made partial human colonization possible; and it whirled through space in an intricate orbital dance with a fluid-core type pulsar and a small black hole. Even the pulsar was peculiar, having a rotation period of almost four seconds. So Azlaroc was a strange-enough world for anyone.

Even without the veils that yearly formed and fell from space.

The robot, assuming it to be about the size and shape of a man, was now about waist deep in the subduction trench. On Earth and elsewhere such trenches existed in the ocean bottoms, infolding rock and other matter from the sea floors into the planet's mantle, and incidentally forming an impassable barrier to the spread of plant life along the bottom. On Earth, some ten centimeters of surface per year might be carried into the depths, with approximately the same amount being simultaneously evolved from sub-oceanic ridges. On Azlaroc the analogous process seemed capable of consuming, at least in some zones of rapid action, ten centimeters

or more of surface per minute. Sorokin in his wanderings had sometimes seen some of the smaller geometric solids that were the landscape's natural features borne down into the trenches and out of sight.

Just as the robot making the recording was now about to go. Now the recorder itself was on the very bottom of the trench, level with the purple floor that looked solid and yet not. For a moment longer Ramachandra's and Callisto's eyes looking down at it could be seen, and beyond their imaged heads the yellowish sky—that-was-not-a-sky of Azlaroc with a tall asymptotic pinnacle of landscape breaking off in radiant fire against it at an altitude of a hundred meters or so. And then the hologram went dark with the absolute blackness of underground. Dark save for a digital display of hours and minutes, which was evidently generated within the recorder itself and now appeared projected near the floor of the room in which the three people watched. The display was running up from a zero hour, minute and second that had evidently been set as the time when the carrier machine began its descent into the trench.

Ramachandra's voice in the darkened room was tense as he leaned forward to make an adjustment to the machine. "We'll speed it up a little. No telling how long this phase of darkness lasts." The digital chronometer figures blurred into a faster flow. One hour. Two. Three.

"Why shouldn't the darkness last the whole time the camera's underground?" Sorokin asked. He had gotten himself involved in this now, for better or worse, and he decided he had better learn all he could of what was going on. "I mean, I assume this recorder was somehow carried through the interior of the world and brought up again by natural forces at Ruler Ridge. How long ago did you put it into the trench?"

Ramachandra was leaning forward in his throne-like chair, staring absently into the darkness of the hologram, and did not answer. "About one year," said Callisto, abstractedly. Sorokin had almost expected the answer, having come to note the same periodicity in all sorts of apparently unrelated Azlaroc events. Years elsewhere might be based on some seasonal or astronomical cycle of little importance to society, or on the mere borrowed standard year of Earth. But systemic years here, each marked by the falling of its veil from space, were a central fact of human life.

Callisto went on: "We put down more than twenty recorders in all, at different points along different subduction trenches. This is the first to be recov-

ered, and I rather suspect it may also be the last."

"Why?" Sorokin asked. In the hologram there was still only darkness, accented rather than relieved by the flicker of time (one hundred twenty days now on the chronometer, one hundred twenty-one . . .) and by the signals that the watching eye and brain began to generate within themselves. "I mean, I get the impression that this isn't an ordinary research project, and . . . it's Doctor Callisto, isn't it? Haven't you been involved in physics research on Azlaroc for some time? I've seen or heard your name in that connection, now that I think about it."

She looked at him more closely than before. "Yes, I have been involved in such research. And you're also right that this is something a little different."

Ramachandra had reached out again to slow the machine, reverse it briefly, and now with a scowl he was letting it run forward again, somewhat more slowly this time. "Thought I saw something there—but no. This is engineering, Mr. Sorokin. We're going to achieve something specific aside from any gain of knowledge."

"What are we out to achieve, Mr. Ramachandra?"

The other man shifted his position but remained intent on the hologram and did not look round as he spoke. "I intend to leave Azlaroc."

For a moment Sorokin thought that the other was saying euphemistically that he was soon to die; settlers spoke of leaving Azlaroc in that sense when they spoke of it at all. But death could be easily managed without so straining one's eyes after stray gleams of enlightenment issuing from very strangely mangled and very expensive recorders; and this was not a man for euphemisms.

"But you're a settler here," Sorokin said, as he thought, reasonably enough.

It had been written of one of the old king-capitalists of Earth that facing his stare was like standing in the path of an oncoming locomotive. Locomotives, transport devices of the time, had evidently been (like some of the men who owned them) exceedingly powerful and very crudely controlled, ready to push through human flesh as indifferently as air. Sorokin was reminded of this now when Ramachandra stopped the machine momentarily and turned to give him a full glance.

"I settled here by free choice some forty-nine years ago, Mr. Sorokin. And now it is my equally free choice to leave."

Sorokin could only look at him dumbly. Forty-nine of the impenetrable veils

of Azlaroc were bound around the atoms of this man's body, and now he had decided to depart. Even if there had been only a single veil to hold him down, not all the power of all the engines ever built by man could lift a single atom of his body free.

In the hologram the images of bright numbers were poised in darkness. "Mr. Sorokin. Since you are going to be working for me, let me make sure you understand me, as Doctor Callisto here has come to do." Ramachandra gestured economically toward a corner of the room where a set of carved pieces waited on a mosaic table. "We are playing chess. You tell me it is impossible for me to move my pawn from the second rank back to the first, and I have no choice but to agree, since I have bound myself to abide by the rules of chess. Now it is a common misconception that leaving Azlaroc after getting caught under a veil is impossible in the same sense as is moving one's pawn backward. It is not, though of course it has never yet been accomplished. I for one have not agreed to any such rule." With the air of one who has made a point to his own complete satisfaction, he turned back to his machine and started the numbers piling up again.

Sorokin raised his eyes to Callisto's; the look she returned refused any agreement that her employer was mad.

Sorokin asked them both: "Do you expect that this recorder will give you some clue toward getting through the veils?"

The others exchanged a quick look. "Getting through them in the usual sense may not be necessary," said Ramachandra. "Have you ever studied the way in which the veils contact about this world?"

Before he could reply, Sorokin's eyes were dazzled by a burst of blue-white radiance from the hologram. The projector would of course create no image of an intensity injurious to human eyes, but the blurred brightness of this one suggested that its original might well have been of such power. There was no longer any up or down perceptible in the image, which was of layers of blue and white in many shadings and combinations, layers and stripes of light and seeming fire that ruffled past first horizontally and then diagonally as the robot or whatever was left of it changed attitudes during its speeding passage through—what? What medium was it traversing now, at some unknown depth beneath the habitable zone?

Azlaroc was as round as a planet or a star, and beneath its cloudy pseudo-sky, which was really the upper boundary of a thin but stable region of gravity-inversion, it had greater habita-

ble area by far than Earth. Its surface was warmed gently by internal heat, lighted by harmless radiation that several causes splashed across the seeming sky, and covered by air and moisture that men with their elegant machinery had generated for themselves and continued to recycle as required. After a veil fell the next thing men had to do was produce new air and water for the next season's tourists; otherwise those coming down would have quickly died amid air of ample pressure, as each atom of the air of other years was bound unusably inside its portion of that year's veil. The partial pressures of the various co-existing atmospheres never added up to more than unity; the same effect that made settlers warp farther from present reality with every year that passed, each veil that fell, was even more marked at the molecular and atomic levels.

Sorokin had seen, from time to time and with no particular interest, scientists' descriptions of their careful probes into Azlaroc's mysterious interior. Jargony recitals of numbers and pressures and phases, densities and more numbers and relativistic effects and still more numbers and mathematics, with suggestions that space near the core of Azlaroc might connect directly somehow with space at the crystalline surface of the companion pulsar. This fact or possibility of course had some connection with the veils...

The famed veils of Azlaroc were formed out of material that the triple system gathered to itself as it swung on its way through space. They were the stuff between the stars, worked on by the unimaginable gravitation and radiation, the electric and magnetic fields that obtained within the belts of space that all ships had to avoid when traveling within this system. Once every systemic year a veil of this transformed matter fell on Azlaroc. The first veil that men ever saw took an exploring party—who thus became the first old settlers—by surprise. They saw it as a net of gossamer that fell toward them from a sky gone mad. After discovering that they could not leave, they discovered that life here was not uncomfortable, and healthy life was considerably prolonged. Since that time some thousands of other settlers had come, voluntarily.

Sorokin had seen the scientists' estimates that about forty million of the impervious, indestructible veils had fallen on Azlaroc and made themselves part of its fabric since the unique triple system had reached its present apparently stable state. Forty million years... not long, on the time scale of astronomy, but imagine forty million

of those veils, all gathered somewhere...

The speeding blue stripes of the hologram ran through a complex sequence of change in which they first narrowed, then widened out again, before contracting abruptly into a singularity of darkness that exploded outward into light, this time the bold glory of a star-filled universe.

"By all the veils!" Sorokin found that he was standing, his hand clutching as if instinctively toward Ramachandra, who brushed its irritation from him. Ramachandra had stopped time in the hologram, frozen its action.

One hundred eighty-seven days after going down into the subduction zone, the recorder had somehow emerged among the stars, whose splendid images now filled the room.

Only after staring at the scene before him for a few moments, did Sorokin make out that the stars in its lower half formed a slightly blurred mirror-image of those above, as if reflected in a frozen ocean of great smoothness. And all the stars were bluer than one would have expected a random selection of the galaxy to appear, as if these were being viewed from the bottom of some steep gravitational well.

"I thought there was nowhere on Azlaroc from which one could see..." Sorokin sat down again and let the foolish words trail off. He knew there could be no such view from any point on Azlaroc.

Ramachandra reached to push the speed control of the machine up to a real-time pace. At once all the depicted stars began to move, blurring into streaks with the speed at which they rose and set. Each star moved from horizon to horizon in less than two seconds, while its image simultaneously tracked across the unbelievable mirrorlike plain below. And the whole scene in its entirety was jumping, pulsing, at about one third the speed of a calm human heart. The innumerable speedstreaked star-images by which the plain was visible all jumped in unison with every pulse, the pulses being timed to coincide with...

"The pulsar, then, the neutron star. It recorded this scene from the pulsar's surface... but wait. No, that's..."

"Impossible, my friend? Ha? Hey?" It was the first time Sorokin had seen the big man smile. Ramachandra was elated now. He stopped the action in the hologram, reversed it, ran it forward slowly from the point of the recorder's entry onto the pulsar's surface, savoring every moment.

Sorokin had the feeling that he was the one who was being swindled here,

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An Interview with Zenna Henderson

BY PAUL WALKER

ODYSSEY: What was the origin of the "People" stories? Why have you gone on writing them?

HENDERSON: The "People" stories originated with "Ararat". When I first started, I planned a story about some people who crossed the Atlantic by "lifting" from their home in Transylvania—with all the concomitant stuff that goes with Transylvania. But, as usual, I found that I can't write about unpleasant people, so I changed it to instill refugees, and the "People" emerged.

I went on writing them because I liked them. And at a time when I was experiencing considerable unhappiness in my personal life, the stories helped occupy my thoughts.

Also the fan response was unanimously pro, and even the crank letters were mostly happy. I will probably write more of them. (You do know that each story was originally a separate novelette, don't you?)

ODYSSEY: You said you conceived each of the "People" stories as a separate novelette, but have you kept a detailed record of the characters, the events, history, etc.? You seemed to have filled out the middle of the story, but have you considered an end to it?

HENDERSON: No, I haven't compiled a history of the "People" but, this summer, a fan of mine sent me her compilation of people, ages, relationships, etc., that she used as a college paper—and I haven't even had time to read it yet! I've not considered an end. The series may expire because my interest might get engaged in other areas. As of now, I hope to write more of them.

ODYSSEY: There are certain incidents (teacher-pupil confrontation, problems of communication, etc.), themes such as loneliness, cultural isolation, alienation, the "miraculous" element in everyday life, that recur in your "People" and other stories. How autobiographical is your work?

HENDERSON: The "People" aren't autobiographical. All of the stories are based on students I have taught, places I've known, experiences I've had, but the stories are not of any specific anything in my life. The

people, places, and events are syntheses of dozens of people, places, and events plus imagination and alteration to fit the needs of the specific stories.

The miraculous in daily life I write about because I am so conscious of it all the time. Miracles go on all the time. Oh, not the wave-a-wand, boi-oi-oi! type of miracles, but all the wonderful, slow miracles of life, growth, and being.

ODYSSEY: There does seem to be a running theme in the stories that of cultural isolation; of a people cut off from the mainstream of the world, fearful of cultural confrontation, of misunderstanding, if not physical harm. What about this theme? And could it possibly relate to your own experiences with the Indian and Mexican children in Arizona?

HENDERSON: Never came across it among the kids. It's only the educated adults that have coined the expression. How much Spanish culture do you think a six-year old has who was born in Eloy, and whose parents were, too? There is economic isolation when you can't afford something, but not hardly nobody feels culturally isolated. The isolation I write about, and that apparently finds an answering "me, too!" from my readers, is the isolation of person from persons. It's the human state. As Ogden Nash said in one of his poems—a person is never so lonely as when he tries to pretend he isn't. Every (sic) one is lonely. Each of us is an island in the last analysis. It is our reaction to this isolation that determines the type of person we are.

ODYSSEY: A multiple question. Most of your stories concern children—especially male children. And the stories in your collection, *The Anything Box*, all seem to have a common theme, best expressed in the story, "Turn the Page": "Believe again! You have forgotten how to believe in anything beyond your chosen treadmill. You have grown out of the fairy tale age, you say. But what have you grown into? ... With your hopeless, scolding tears at night, and your dry-eyed misery when you awaken. Do you like it?"

Faith. The capacity for wonder, im-

agination, mystery, enchantment. The supreme tragedy of our growing up is our loss of the capacity for these things. And that loss results in a hollowness of being. But fortunately we have children to revive, to re-educate, us in them.

HENDERSON: Yes, most of my stories concern children, but I quarrel with your "especially male children". I haven't conducted a head count but I'd be willing to bet that it's about six of one and a half-dozen of the other. Almost consciously I think "boy, last time"—better be a girl this time!

The thing to believe in is the ultimate triumph of Good. And that God is a personal God who knows each one of us as we can't know ourselves; who has given us life for a unique function that no one else can ever perform; that we are responsible for our every action, thought, and word; and we will be held personally accountable for them when we go through Deeth into the presence of God. That we are never alone, never forsaken, never beyond God's love and compassion—and always as important as if we were the only mortal ever created.

Last of sermon?

Well, if you feel you are far away from God, be advised—He isn't the one who moved!

I think the feeling of futility, of emptiness, of aloneness begins to show itself in juvenile delinquency, and ends in a society that suffers as ours does now.

ODYSSEY: The major criticism of your work is that it is "sentimental". You have been accused of being a "woman's writer". How do you feel about that?

HENDERSON: A writer is a writer is a writer. That a woman writer sounds like a woman writer is no great thing. A man writer sounds like a man writer! So? Is either of them a thing to point at either in praise or criticism? I don't consider myself "sentimental". Maybe I'm "sympathetic." I know I'm empathetic. To me a good story is a good story whether it's from a male or female. I truly don't think there is a man sound or a woman sound to a story.

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PRISONER

(Continued from page 35)

"Warren Gamaliel Harding," Suley put in, to join the game; the pretty name had stuck in her mind.

"Well, no. Not Harding," said Harvey apologetically. "He was dead before the tunnel was built, in the year—" He paused, fumbled for the date, raced on. "But it was the fastest, best way in and out of the greatest city in the world! Thousands and thousands of vehicles every day. And look at it now!"

They biked closer and Sim stared into it. "It's full of water," he said.

"Not only water," whispered Harvey portentously. "Many other things. Fifty-six Greyhound buses, filled with celebrities and statesmen and movie stars. A Brinks armored car, loaded until the axles creak with rare gold coins and the art treasures of the Whitney Museum. The entire diamond stock of Cartier's, the world's most famous jewelry store."

"Wow," said Suley. "I'd like to see all those diamonds." She moved closer to peer, hoping to see a glint of blue-white fire, but the water was skinned with algae. It seemed to move restlessly.

"So why couldn't someone get them out? They could go in with diving gear," Sim offered.

"They could," cried Harvey, nodding his beard, "but they would never come out again. Oh, many have gone in. But inside that tunnel are fourteen huge hammerhead sharks, swimming back and forth, patrolling those treasures. Go in if you like. Swim around a truck, over a Volkswagen, and then, before you know it, one of them is upon you. Monstrous! A thousand teeth! Fast as underwater lightning! A rush, and it was zoomed past you, and one of your arms is gone. Again—and there is nothing of you left to live, only shreds. Oh, many, many, have tried, but none of them are alive today."

"Hey, bullshit, old man," called one of the kids.

Harvey spun around, roaring. "Get away from here! I'll tell your father on you!"

"Yeah, but, honest, old man, that's bullshit." The kid pushed his bike up closer. He looked a little like the way you would expect Tom Sawyer to look, except that he was black. He had a sloppy straw hat and a round friendly face, and one of his front teeth was missing.

"Don't get too close to him, Jeremy," one of his friends warned.

"Him? He's okay. But how would you know all that, Mr. Hennessee? There couldn't be any sharks in there unless they crawled across Tenth Avenue."

"The tunnel's cracked, boy," cried Harvey, glaring at the other children for

giggling. "Don't you know anything at all? How do you suppose the water got inside, if not from a crack?"

"Oh, yeah, but a little crack," the boy persisted. "A big shark couldn't get in through a little crack. And what would he live on?"

"Bodies," said the old man wisely. "At first it was bodies. And they weren't big when they came in. That was years and years ago. They were tiny. They've grown. And there's other fish in there; they eat them. Not to mention kids, now and then, that think what I'm saying is bullshit so they skink in there. And anyway," he finished triumphantly, "I can prove that tunnel's wide open to the river. It probably started as a little crack, but it isn't any more."

"How would you know that?" demanded Jeremy, all twelve serious-minded years of him.

"Observation and deduction! You ever notice how the tide goes here? It used to hang behind the tides in the river. Tide would go up a foot at the docks, and an hour or so later it would be up, oh, maybe an inch or two here. Tide go down a foot in the river, then it would go down a little bit here. But not any more! This water's level with the river every minute, you check it for yourself if you don't believe me. So the crack that used to let the water in and out a little at a time, now it's wide open. Like I said. Go away."

The boy looked at him in silent doubt, then appealingly toward Sim. "Is he crapping me, mister?"

"I have no idea," Sim said. He had seldom seen a black person. He knew he was staring.

"I think he is."

"You tell him, Jeremy," said another boy. "Make him prove it."

"I think it's true about the tide," Sim said thoughtfully. "But the part about the hammerhead sharks, I don't know."

Harvey moved closer to Sim. "Throw them some pot if you've got it, dear friend. Otherwise they'll just bother us all day, and I have many nice things to show you. A really nice place to eat—"

"I'd like that," said Suley.

Sim shook his head. He said decisively. "We're going to our hotel. My middle wife is very tired."

"I am?" asked Suley, startled.

"—and it will be dark soon—"

"There's a full moon," Harvey offered eagerly.

"—and anyway it's been a long trip. We'll get a fresh start in the morning."

IV

Sim signed the register with a bold stroke, as though he checked in at New York hotels every day of his life: "Sim-J and Suley-J, Tucson."

It was a very cliffed hotel in appearance, although at one time places like it had lined most of the highways of

America. It had been built for tourists who wanted to drive to New York City but not in New York City; it was just across the street from the Hudson River, a few blocks from what Sim pointed out as Times Square.

Suley found herself being quite happy, and for half an hour at a time she forgot their sad errand, and when she remembered it did not seem quite so sad, being diluted by excitement. Their room was very comfortable. It had strange, awkward stick-up furniture, tall shelves on a narrow base as though the furnishings of the hotel copied the skyscrapers all around it. New York Vertical. But the windows were open to the scorching late afternoon, and there was a breeze that smelled of green fields and the sea, and was thought quite fragrant by Suley, used to Arizona. Out of their window, beyond the ruin of a covered pier, she could see the bright, clear river ambled down toward the sea, and marveled at all that beautiful water going to lose itself in brine. And when she checked the bathroom she was delighted. "It all works!" she cried, the shower misting her as she flushed the toilet.

Sim looked in the doorway thoughtfully. "Hot, too. I'm pretty sure the old water system isn't working any more, so they must pump it from the river." He leaned out the window and reported: "Solar panels and solar cells, yes."

"I want to take a shower," decided Suley.

"Go on," said Sim indulgently. It would not take a great deal of time anyway; it was not as though Suley had much in the way of clothing to take off or put on. But she did take her time. All that water! In Tucson Collective they hoarded every drop; when the Brown Wash failed, which was often, even lilewater for the crops had to be trenced in from as far as San Carlo Lake. Here she could let it plunge against the back of her neck as long as she liked and know that there was endless more going to waste a hundred yards away. She took so much luxuriating time that when she came out the tiny room was almost dark.

She slipped into sex-string and breast holder, wishing as always that she were a little less majestically proportioned for comfort's sake (but otherwise proud enough), and opened the door out of the steamy bathroom. Their bedroom was darkly red, and perched on the sill of the window, silhouetted against orange and maroon cloud across the river, Sim sat silently, deep in thought.

"I'm hungry, dear Sim. That was marvelous."

He didn't turn his head. "All right" He busied herself with his totebag, a spray here, a touch of lipstick there, pondering over Sim's moods; and then, in a wave of irritation and tenderness,

she cried: "I know! Sim, you're jealous." He turned and glared at her—she could not see his expression against the light behind him, but she knew from the set of his shoulders what it had to be. "Bull, Suley!" They were clean-spoken in Tucson, not like these New Yorkers; but the emphasis came through.

She said staunchly, "I think you are, Sim. You're jealous of Charley Four Trees, even if he's dead."

"That's crazy, Suley. I wanted you to marry him in. I'm tired of being the youngest."

"Yes, I think that's true," she agreed. "But he's dead, and I think you're jealous that I wanted to come here."

Coldly, "There's a difference between being jealous and thinking that you're carrying on in a really excessive way."

She didn't answer, because she was filtering what he said through her orderly mind, in the way that always infuriated him. He said, "Let's go eat."

"You go ahead, honey, I'll be down in a minute." He looked surprised, but he went. She knew he was suspicious—why would she want him to leave her alone, even for a moment, unless there was something she wanted to do that he was likely to resent? And, of course, he was right.

In any event, Sim actually liked waiting for her in the lobby. He had never been in a "lobby" before, though he had come across the expression often enough in his reading. He sat there on a green Naugahyde couch and wished for a morning *New York Herald-Tribune* to hide behind, so that he might fantasize himself a commercial traveler of, what?, say around 1925 or so, watching the morning TV news and waiting for the steamboat to take him up to Boston.

He was almost alone. The hotel did not cater to tourists, in fact there hardly were any tourists coming in to New York these days, as was indicated by the oversupply of eager volunteer guides. There was not much pressure on the facilities of the lobby. The few outsiders who came into New York usually went straight to whatever they had come to do, did it, and fed back to Staten Island or Jersey or wherever as soon as they could. The city was not really dangerous anymore—Sim was certain of that in his mind, though what his glands felt was not as sure—but the aura lingered on: violence, pestilence, filth and death.

Yet there were things that people had to come here for. Most of the people on their boat had been trade representatives; some were scientists or students. The big library on Forty-Second Street was heavily patronized by researchers, so were all the smaller, specialized collections all around the city. The museums were still picked over from time to time, although most of what was

worth having had been taken away long before. Medical teams came in several times a year to screen all the inhabitants, on the chance that the City Sickness might be coming back. (It never had, though each year they turned up a few carriers.)

Sim got bored after a while, wondering what was keeping Suley, and wandered over to the coffee shop. He puzzled over the menu chalked on a board behind the counter: "Roast haunch of young kid, spring-killed." "Manhattan clam chowder and sourdough rolls." "Special. Iced birch tea." He sat down and waited, gradually relaxing. You could imagine, say, Diamond Jim Brady sitting in that very room with his three dozen oysters and the star of the Rockettes on his knee. But there were no oysters and no ballerinas visible. Neither was there a white-aproned waiter with hair slicked back, juggling trays of needed beer. It was a nice place to visit, he decided. Of course, one of the things that defined a nice place to visit was that the visit could end when you wanted it to. They could leave. The people who lived here couldn't . . . and neither, of course, could Charley Four Trees, not ever again forever.

When Suley came down she looked very pretty and most eminently desirable, but there was an expression in her eyes that troubled him. They ate the roast young kid—not as good as he had had in Bisbee and Nogales, but nicely hung—and helped themselves to coffee and small, berry-filled cakes from a board at the side of the room, and when they sat down again he put his arm around her shoulder. "Dear Sim," she said, "not tonight, I'm near my time and I don't want to take a pill."

He didn't remove his arm, but she could feel it changing from a caress to a weight. She sighed; it was hard being the only wife available. "Also," she explained, "I just took a three-mil shot."

That explained the look in her eyes. "You want to dream Charley?"

"You can, too," she said. "I fixed another shot for you in case."

After a moment he said, "Maybe I will, but not now. Should we go up to the room?"

"There's no hurry; it'll be at least half an hour yet before I feel it. Sim?"

He looked at her over his coffee cup inquiringly. She went on:

"I think it's nice here, Sim. And all that water! Why don't people live here any more?"

"Some do."

"No, I don't mean the ones like that funny little man. Why don't they have a collective here? I mean," she said, "I know about the Sickness and all those things about how crowding produces neurosis and psychosis. But that was so long ago, hundreds of years—"

"Less than one hundred. Who's to

say it's over, Suley? The City Sickness came from dog fleas, and that's why you won't see any dogs here any more, but the city was sick before that. And would be again, if we let it. Cities are crowding. Crowding makes sickness. There's no way around it—"

Suley felt suddenly giddy. She looked at the coffee suspiciously; they didn't drink much of that at Tucson Collective. It didn't taste as good as it seemed to at first. She put the cup down and let Sim's voice go on explaining things to her. She knew he liked to explain, and so she asked questions, sometimes, that she didn't care about having answered, just to give him the chance. He was talking about what cities were like, the crowds, the smells, the dirt. She could almost feel them. An animal reek of unwashed bodies in her nostrils. The all-around pressure of a swaying body-to-body mob in a subway train in the rush hour. She felt as though she were actually there, actually feeling what New Yorkers must have felt. She was a woman, not more than twenty, coffee-skinned, in a miniskirt with nothing under it, clutching a fire ladder in an alleyway and vomiting, vomiting, vomiting and sweating in the clutches of heroin withdrawal . . .

She sat up suddenly. "You'd better get me upstairs, Sim. The shot's beginning to hit."

V

There was no Charley in her dreams that night. What she woke with was a confusion of dirt and misery. She shook her head when Sim asked her about the dreams, and didn't talk much until they were outside, ready to go.

Harvey Hennessee beamed down at them from the top of a four-wheeled carriage. "Ho, old man," said Sim, "what's this?"

"I knew you'd love it," Hennessee said. "You love it, don't you? Of course you do. This carriage has gone a hundred thousand times around Central Park, carrying lovers and strangers and sad, tired people who needed to be alone for an hour—"

"What happened to the bicycles?" "They're here," said Hennessee, his face falling. "But I thought you'd like the carriage."

"Um," said Sim. "Maybe so." He studied the ancient vehicle with curiosity, then the horse, who wore a cockade of red, white and blue plumes braided into his mane. "That's a sad horse you've got there, Hennessee."

"Gentle as a lamb! Strong as a—he's a very strong horse, I promise you. Costs a fortune to rent him, but that's my worry, right?"

"You talk very much," Suley said admiringly, beginning to feel a little better. "Let's do it, Sim."

Sim shrugged. "Can you take us to

the UN Building?"

"You want to do some sightseeing!" crowed Hennessee, delighted. "Of course I can! Get in."

The faded street sign said Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza. In the bright overhead light from the late-morning sun the glass monolith stood as tall as it ever had, but all of its glass was cracked and shabby.

Suley glanced around, pouting. Some kids were following them again, one of them perhaps the same as the boy who had kept them company the day before, but she didn't even look at them. "Where is it, Sim?"

Sim addressed the old man. "There was a blow-balloon that crashed around here," he said. "What happened to it?"

"Why, it's here, my friend. Next block. I came across on Forty-Fourth on purpose to miss it, it fills the whole street. Came a-tearing-and, a-careening across the sky four months ago, that terrible March storm, ripping its guts out all across town. Everyone aboard it killed. Awful thing."

"Will you drive, man?" Sim said angrily. "You're talking us to death!" Hennessee looked wounded, but picked up the reins and ducked at the horse, and they creaked up First Avenue to the intersection, and there it was. It no longer had the shape of a blow-balloon. The golden lower shell and the black solar top were crushed together and shredded; one piece twenty yards across still hung from the cornice of a building down the block, the rest was untidily sprawled across the street.

They got out of the carriage. "What a mess," said Sim.

Suley felt the tears misting in her eyes, but the way to keep them back was to do something. She raised her voice. "You children! You, Mr. Hennessee. Listen to me. A very good friend of ours was in this balloon when it crashed. We want to find his body."

"Want to give it proper burial, do you, miss? That's a fine, considerate—"

"It's not what we want to do with it, Hennessee," said Sim, "and what we do what I doubt you'd understand. First thing we have to do is find the gondola."

The boy named Jeremy edged closer. "What's a gondola?"

"It's the part where the people were. On the bottom. Have you ever seen a blow-balloon up close?"

The children looked at each other. "This one," Jeremy offered.

"No, you can't tell from this one," Sim said impatiently. "Look, there are three parts. The first part is the top, it's all shiny black, like—" he hesitated—"yes, like the tops of the boats that come from Staten Island. Solar cells."

"Oh, sure. They're glass."

"They're quartz. They turn the sunlight into electricity. Then there's the bottom part, that's whatever color they like, mostly sort of golden yellow, depending on whose balloon it is. And inside is hot air, but you can't see that, and drive jets, but you can't see them either except at the very back; and underneath is a sort of curved part hanging down. That's the gondola. That's what we're looking for."

Jeremy whispered to another boy, eyed Hennessee, and said, "What do we get if we find it for you?"

"We'll make it worth your while," Sim said. "Come on, if we all pull together we can get this fabric out of the way. It's really not very heavy."

"Sht, man, said the boy. "You try lifting it, you think that. That's really heavy. If it wasn't, wouldn't be here any more. Somebody would've taken it."

"Well—all right, maybe it is. But we can move it."

Hennessee stared shrewdly at Sim, then at the boys. He grinned. "What we're thinking, my dear friend," he said, "is maybe we know something you don't. I believe I may speak for my associates here?" He cocked an eyebrow at the boys, then nodded; a deal had been made. "What, specifically, is it for us if we find your gondola for you?"

Sim scowled, but he had been warned about New Yorkers before he ever left Arizona. "All right. First, a hundred grams of Nogales grass, shade grown, cleaned and cured, for every one who helps us. Then when we get the gondola out, for the body of Charley Four Trees twenty three-mill shots of the tempus drug. It's our own, old man. It's not psilocybin, not peyote; but it lets you see true things that are not true now. Also, old man, we will pay you for your expenses in Pennsylvania dollars."

Harvey Hennessee considered. "That's fair," he decided, taking a vote of the boys with his eyes. "Yes, that's fair." He licked his lips. "One has heard rumors of this drug. I've always wanted—well, you see, dear friends, we do know something you don't. We'll lift that bag for you if you want, but the gondola isn't under it."

Suley cried out, clutching her heart. "It has to be! To be this close, and then to find out he wasn't there—"

"I am truly sorry, dear miss, but it isn't. Oh, there's no doubt of it. The thing came bouncing and twisting all across the island, hit a building, ripped itself open, hit again, scraped the hanging-down part away and finally landed here. There are pieces of it as far as Central Park, not to mention what the urchins and the prospectors have carried off." And the boys nodded to show it was true.

Sim put his arm around Suley. "All

right, the offer still stands," she said steadfastly. "If the gondola came off, it has to be somewhere. Let's find it!"

The gondola was easy enough to find, or part of it. It lay across a fountain in a square near Central Park, or part of it did. But it had been picked clean, and there were no bodies in it.

"Our people are not savages," Hennessee said, when Sim taxed him with the question. "We couldn't leave them to rot!"

"No, of course. But where are they?" Hennessee shrugged. "Our own, of course, we bury. Strangers—"

"Come on, old man!"

"Usually," said Hennessee, "they go in the river." He glanced at Suley, who had caught her breath in pain. "I see this is quite important to you," said Hennessee. "Can you tell me why?"

"Why not?" Sim said, actually questioning Suley but already sure of the answer. Charley Four Trees was a crewman on the balloon. It was meant to be his last trip. When he came back he was going to marry into our spread. The pledges were all made, and that's what's important to us; it is bad for the group if they aren't kept."

"So you want the body to take home for burial?"

Sim sighed. "Old man, the body is nothing. But if we can find it—if we can find even a small piece of it, not too badly decayed; perhaps even a fragment of bone, anything, as long as the gene pattern is intact—then, we can have Charley Four Trees. Not as a young husband, but as a child. We can clone from that." And he would have gone on to explain how the delicate bioengineering process worked, recapturing the genetic code from any scrap of tissue and implanting it in an ovum so that the child, when born, would again be Charley Four Trees; but Hennessee was not very interested and Suley had lost her patience:

"Where is he?" she cried.

"We will ask," promised Hennessee, and led the way to a flight of stairs in the street marked IND UPTOWN-DOWNTOWN-QUEENS. "Our wine caves," he said proudly. "You've heard of our Fifth Avenue Red? Grown in the vineyards just past where we came from in Central Park. With it and the Flatbush White that our cousins across the river produce we have no need of any other—"

"Please," said Suley, and Hennessee nodded and disappeared.

When he came back he looked somber. "There are some pieces of equipment there," he said, "and I have asked the vintner, a friend of mine, to let you see them if you like. But no bodies. They were carried to the river and dumped."

Sim took a breath and said, "Is there a chance we could drag the river?"

"Dear friend," said Hennessee,

shaking his head, "it has been four months. There is nothing left, believe me. What I said about—" he glanced at the boys, and moved closer to Sim—"about the sharks, perhaps that's not true. One likes to make things interesting for the tourists. But there wouldn't be anything left, the crabs and the eels would have—there would be nothing left," he said, changing course quickly as he caught a glimpse of the expression on Suley's face.

Suley stood, drained, in the hot sun. She felt Sim's fingers creep into her hand, and pressed back. Now the quaint old city no longer seemed quaint, just old and unpleasant.

"Some of them fell out," the boy, Jeremy, said.

Suley dropped Sim's hand. "What?" "When they hit the first time, lady. Over by Broadway. Split open, a couple of them fell out. Then later on the whole thing got scraped off, but my friend Tony, he saw one body anyway, up near Lincoln Center."

"Take us there!" Suley commanded—

V

They kept on looking, all that long, hot day, until the towering white clouds on the horizon crept over them and turned black and the lightning and rain drove them back to the hotel, and there was nothing.

They ate quietly, and sat for a while in a drinking establishment at the top of the hotel, looking out at the lightning and the downpour. It would have been just like that, Suley thought, only colder and worse. She could imagine the blow-balloon's crew trapped in the sudden storm, fighting to keep the ship aloft, while the tearing rain chilled the hull and cost them their lift, and the winds threw them mercilessly into the fangs of the city.

Sim was disquietingly cheerful. "At least," he said consolingly, "it's been interesting, hasn't it, Suley? We'll have something to tell them about in Tucson." For they had seen a great deal of the city, from the farms behind the old Zoo to the carefully arranged traffic jam in front of Lincoln Center, two hundred ancient cars carefully pushed and maneuvered into a four-way toup, just like certain time at the opera. What they hadn't seen was Charley Four Trees, or any part of him. Sim patted Suley's hand. "They didn't know," he said. "Look at it from their point of view. It would have been worse to just leave the bodies there to rot."

She didn't answer. "So we might as well go back pretty soon," he said. "I wouldn't mind seeing the festivities tomorrow—it's the fourth of the month, and I understand it's quite a show. But day after, we might

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as well head home."

Suley said, "I hate to give up on him, Sim."

"Well—Did you dream anything last night? You never said."

She stirred and sipped at her drink. "Nothing about Charley. It was all sort of strange and unpleasant. This place has so many ghosts, Charley is just one person. How many people do you suppose lived on this island? Millions, I'm sure. Twenty million maybe?" She looked out, squinting against a lightning flash. "I think if I'd taken ten mils instead of three I might have had better luck."

Sim shrugged, but he was frowning. The tempus drug wasn't dangerous, particularly, but if you took enough of it you saw more than you wanted to, sometimes.

"I'm going to try it," Suley decided. "Do you want to join me?"

"No!" Then, more gently, "I'll keep an eye on you, Suley. If you need me to talk you down I'll be there."

She touched his hand. "Well, I know you will," she said, surprised that he should even mention it.

And he was; but there was nothing about Charley in her dreams that night. Sim woke early, with the rattle of rain still on the windows in the gray morning light. She was twitching and turning in the bed beside him, her face showing fear and joy and wonder in split-second flashes. He touched her shoulder, and the contact seemed to reassure her, but he could still see that she was deeply into dreams of times past.

There was no point in waking her. There would be no sightseeing in this rain, and Sim wasn't anxious to follow Suley's demon in it either. He stole out of the room to get coffee and brought a pot back to the bedside; and he lay there next to her, for an hour or more, one arm around her and the other reaching out from time to time for a cramped sip of the cold coffee.

Toward noon she woke up, looked at him unseeing for a moment and then propped herself up against the pillow. He offered her what was left in the cup; she tasted it, made a face and handed it back. "Anything?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," she said, and paused to try to remember. "I don't know. I think I saw the balloon there for a minute. Just a glimpse. But I don't know where, and I didn't see Charley." She rubbed her eyes. "And there were so many other things," she said. "Big men with beards, hundreds of them, chasing a little black child down the street, and when they caught him they—they—they said something about Abe Lincoln? Is that the Lincoln Center?"

"He was the president once. During the Civil War."

"And there was a long, long part about snow. Not snowing down. Lots

and lots of it on the ground, and men shoveling it into trucks. Only they weren't dressed for it. And there was one part where there were thousands and thousands of people—Sim, you wouldn't believe there were so many people! All standing together and drinking and shouting and laughing, and then there was this bright red ball that was moving up the side of a building, and it reached the top and dropped and everybody began to shout and sing..."

"But no Charley."

"No. No. Charley."

Sim swung his legs over the side of the bed. "I'm hungry," he said. "You want to come down and eat?"

"Maybe. Yes, I guess I do. You go ahead and start; I'll be along in a while."

In the lobby Sim caught sight of Harvey Hennessee, standing patiently just inside the door. Parked outside was the carriage, with three of the boys huddled inside it, the flapping top protecting them against at least part of the rain—although it was less now than it had been.

"Good morning, dear friend," said Hennessee, advancing toward him with his great professional smile. "Going to clear up, I'm sure! We'll have a nice day yet, mark my words. Where would you like to go?"

"I thought we might try Greenwich Village," said Sim. "And Wall Street. I've heard a lot about Wall Street."

"I see you know more about the city than you let appear," cried Hennessee approvingly. "Those are fine ideas! Is the young lady ready?"

"She will be," Sim promised. "But first we have to eat. And I'm ready now."

And he felt ready, ready for anything, for whatever venture might come. But he was not as ready as he thought he was. He was not ready for what Suley offered when she joined him in the dining room, ten minutes later. "I've been thinking," she said. "We would have married Charley if he'd come back. We would have had his babies. I want those babies, Sim. One baby. It's all we'll ever have of him, but it's enough."

"Suley, dear!" he cried. "What do you think I've been trying to do? But how can we do a baby without his body?"

"If we can find where he crashed I'm sure we can find at least a bloodstain, Sim."

"Oh, you know better than that! A bloodstain? After all these months? We'd be lucky to pick up half a gene train out of it! We'd never get a whole set of chromosomes—"

"We don't need a whole set, Sim. I've got a half to give."

He stopped, his mouth hanging open.

"I mean it, Sim," she said. "I want that. And I took my temperature just now and it's time. It has to be tonight."

VII

The sun was breaking through when they got to the Park. Sim called Hennessee over and said, "Bend down." The old man looked glum but he did it as Suley was taking a tiny razor out of her totebag. Expertly she shaved a little square just where the spinal column joined the skull. Sim had the shot already, and as soon as she was finished he sprayed Harvey, then Suley herself, and then knelt while Suley sprayed him. The quick chill feeling at the back of the neck disappeared; his eyes watered a little, as they always did, and then there was nothing; there would be nothing; there would be nothing for half an hour or more before it hit. He looked up to see Jeremy moving apprehensively toward him. "Oh, no," said Sim, "I'm not giving this to any kids. Anyway, son, we need you the way you are. We might start acting sort of crazy. You keep an eye on us, hear?" He jumped at the sound of distant explosions. "What was that?"

"Firecrackers," said Harvey Hennessee sourly, rubbing the back of his neck. "It's the Fourth of July. It's a holiday for us."

"It's a holiday for us too, old man," Suley said. "But not this time. Now what we want is to find where our friend went. If he was killed, he must have bled. If he bled, maybe we can find a bloodstain. It doesn't have to be big. One intact cell would be enough. Of course, there won't be even one intact one; but you'd be surprised how little Sim can work with."

"And I'm going to see the past? The real past?"

"More than you ever wanted of it," Suley promised. "We only give you seven mils, but that's a big dose for someone who's never had it before."

Hennessee pursed his lips. "Better than peyote, you said?" He stared into space, then slowly smiled. "How can you beat it?" he demanded. "Whether we find him or not, I'm getting the reward anyway. Well? What do we do?"

"We wait," said Sim; and Suley climbed back into the carriage, the only dry spot around, and leaned back and closed her eyes. After the rain the humidity was nearly oppressive, but it was already beginning to be very hot.

"Lady?"

Suley shook herself; she had almost been asleep. "What?"

Jeremy said, "If you go kind of crazy, like you said—what do you want me to do about it?"

She considered the question carefully.

(Continued on page 56)

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(Continued from page 54)

ly. It was a reasonable question, and deserved a good answer. The noise of the firecrackers was a distraction and made it hard for her to figure out just what the answer should be. . . . but on the other hand, she thought drowsily, the noise was rather pleasant, in its way. A happy, busy sound. A holiday sound—

"Lady?"

She opened her eyes. For a moment she couldn't see the boy; he was hidden by a clump of blackberry bushes, growing in a clearing underneath the tall old trees—

The trees faded away, and she saw Jeremy looking at her anxiously. "Oh, Yes," she said. "Well, just keep us together, as much as you can. And listen to what we say. Especially—especially if you hear me say Charley's name. But you'll do that anyway, won't you?" The shadow of the trees began to hide his face. "Jeremy? Do you hear me?"

"Lady!" The boy seemed to be yelling, but his voice came from very far away. "I mean, your friend wants to go back to the UNI! Should I take him?"

And that too was a reasonable enough question, but for some reason the answer seemed to evade her. She pondered over it for some time, watching the pretty patterns the skaters made on the ice of the lake, before she realized that somebody—was his name Harvey Hennessey?—was yelling in her ear: "Elephant! Dear Mother of God, I see them, elephants by the hundred, and scarlet wagons and a band! It's a circus parade coming up the avenue! I never thought I'd live to see it!"

The firecrackers were very loud now; and then she realized they were not firecrackers at all.

It was a blustery day, not cold, and a long stream of tired, scared men in curiously old-fashioned clothes were stumbling past her, shouldering long-barreled weapons or dragging them. The firing came from behind them, and they turned to look over their shoulders. Someone was riding down the line against the flow, whipping his horse and shouting; Suley knew she had seen that face, the white wig, the strangely ill-fitting teeth, somewhere, somewhere—where? She turned to look more closely, and the man was gone. The rutted country road flattened out into a meadow sprinkled with sheeps made of sheet metal and cardboard, with unshaven men standing around, looking as though there had never in their lives been anything for them to do. It was warm and quiet, except for a distant sound of traffic. She turned toward the sound . . . and the forest was there again. A man in leather trousers and leather jacket was

urinating against a tree; he turned his eyes toward Suley and his expression changed. Suley tried to collect her whirling thoughts. Could they see her? They never had. But she had never taken fifteen miles before—five on her own before they left the hotel, plus the ten Sim had given her. She looked up toward the sky—

And cried out. A quick flash of sunlight beneath a cloud picked out an aircraft.

But at once she knew it wasn't Charley's; it wasn't a blow-balloon at all, but an old fashioned high-tailed jet, banking to turn into an airport, no doubt. In the same breath it was gone; it was night, and foggy. She felt a sensation of moving objects around her. Daylight flared, and she found it was not the objects that were moving, it was herself. Dimly she realized she was probably back in the wagon, and they were probably going somewhere. She could not see the wagon. What she saw was a wide street with curious spider-like structures at some of the corners, platforms on four long legs, and in little sheds in the platforms uniformed men pulling levers that moved semaphores. In the streets below them boxy small cars on narrow wheels bounced along . . . there was a sudden glimpse of that same street, but with the buildings grown huge around it, and the street deserted except for floppy abandoned things lying about that looked like bodies, and . . . huge horses, six at a time harnessed together, pulling immense wagons . . . a tree-lined street with handsome houses with silver knockers on the doors and two gentlemen in tight trousers and cutaways strolling along in the evening . . . an icy sunrise, and a party of four or five top-hatted men, and half a dozen women in short, low-cut dresses and furs, waving bottles and staggering . . . and a forest in an ice-storm, with all the branches waving and tinkling and snapping . . . and THE BLOW-BALLOON SWOOPING DOWN, TORN AND OUT OF CONTROL, and . . . and it was gone; and she turned around and saw herself peering through a cluster of ramshackle houses toward a river . . . and the smell of rank animal manure, and the sounds of the feedlot at Tucson Collective; there was a barge in the river and a long line of stolid steers were following a Judas ram up a ramp toward an abattoir, and . . . the bright square shepe of the UN Building, with a hundred sneeping flegs in the breeze and people milling and bawling in the street waving signs and . . . a cold night, with a dim, distant light in a farmhouse through the gentle snow (she tried to call out, "Take me back! I saw the ship!") and . . . cheering crowds, waving at a passing limousine

(she was moving again) while police held them back, and . . . a cool, moonlit night, with the city tell and empty all around, the glass in the windows cracked, and . . . the river again, and in it a proud thirty-gun frigate sailing slowly and disdainfully upstream, towing a long string of boats, while some people very near her were firing pathetic pipsqueek little cannons at it and shouting in frightened voices, and . . . shooting again, a sudden blast from a moving vehicle, and a man spun out of a doorway and fell into the street, and . . . the ship again? the same one? or another, now coming over the bank of the river and on its deck men in tri-cornered hats firing down into a ragged line of men behind low breastworks that shielded them not at all, and . . . shabby children playing in a farmyard (Suley tried to remember what it was she was looking for; it was on the tip of her tongue), and . . . flashes, bits, fragments (moving again, the drug hitting her very hard now) a trolley that clanged right through her, a blizzard, a sultry night, a clank of train rolling over her head on the elevated railway; another railway, a moment later, this one in a sort of trough in the ground, and herself sailing pleasantly, slowly over it, and . . . crowds cheering, a parade, bands, signs ("Here's to Three Point Two!" "Prosperity is Just Around the Corner!") and . . . a forest path, with a great lean wolf ambling slowly away, and . . . crowds . . . a race of hurrying pedestrians, faces grey and weary . . . another forest, this one cloaked with snow (or the same?), and . . . CHARLEY!—or someone so much like him she could not see a difference—dead!—sprawled across a curb with his head twisted at an angle that could not be possible . . . night, but night bright as day with a million automobiles ("Charley!" she sobbed, but could find no one to beg of) and bright shop windows . . . crowds . . . the forest . . . theater marquees and shooting galleries . . . a long line of tanks, tiny pipsqueak ones, with people waving and cheering and a blizzard of torn paper coming out of the windows . . . the forest, opening to a lake and a stream . . . a railroad track with a locomotive towing a long string of cars, quietly preceded by a man on horseback swinging a red lantern . . . the crowds . . . the forest . . . the night . . .

And the night swept over her and she slept, crying.

She woke up at the hotel, and Jeremy was perched on the edge of the Neugehyde chair, watching her anxiously.

"What—what happened?"

He hopped up and stood over her.

(Continued on page 58)

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"You all right, lady?"

"All right?" She thought that over carefully, then decided, "Certainly I'm all right. Did we find Charley?"

Jeremy looked a little irritated and a lot scared. "I don't know, lady! I mean, I guess your friend found something." Suley stared up into his face, then waved him back and sat up. Harvey Hennessee sat slumped and snoring in a chair across from her. His finery was dragged and stained, but there was an expression of total contentment on his face.

"What did he find?"

Jeremy reached to the back of the couch she had been lying on and handed her a shapeless wad of fabric. "Yelled like a maniac, lady. Dragged me all across the park, down to where

the fountain used to be; then he went racing into the wine caves and came back a while later. He was carrying this."

Suley stood up and shook it out, but she knew what it was even before then. It was a shadow cloak. Not a cloak, Charley's. She had made it for him herself as a betrothal present. The shoulder frame was bent and broken, and there was a huge section torn—no, cut—out of it. But it was his.

"Said to let you sleep it off," the boy offered. "Then he chopped out a hunk of it and went upstairs with it. Been gone an hour, maybe more. Look, lady, do you want something? A drink, maybe? Something to eat? I told him I'd take care of you."

She reached out and put her arms

around him. "Dear Jeremy," she said, "you've taken very good care of me. No, I don't want a thing . . . except for Sim to come down here."

And so he did, not ten minutes later. He looked tired, but he looked exultant.

"Got it," he said. "There's enough. Nearly a full gene chain. I've supplemented it with my own. Come to bed."

VIII

The baby was born in the midward of the hospital at Tucson Collective the following spring, on the 8th of April of 2077. It was a little girl. They named her Charlene Bar Jay. She had Suley's chin and Sim's nose, but the eyes and the hair were pure Charley Four Trees. ★

JEREMIAH

(Continued from page 30)

The two old friends moved in, and Jeremiah breathed the crisp mountain air and smelled the faint fragrance of alpine trees (strange, how important such things suddenly seemed), and prepared to earn the money they had been spending. Drawing on the extensive audio-visual recordings made by Clarence, as well as his own more subjective impressions, he gave the publisher a record of their experiences almost certain to become a classic in every form of print-audio-visual and -sensory media. He never mentioned how much he regretted having spent those thirty years in space.

When the last page and tape were off, Clarence said, "Jeremiah, I regret to inform you this task has taken my last remaining reserves of strength. My upper brain is approaching disordered thinking, and the lower one is quite useless. I believe it best that you turn off my power supply and let my consciousness terminate. If you don't consider the thought too grisly, I'd like to be left standing in the corner of your study. I will make a magnificent statue, and in a way be with you for the rest of your life. Please don't forget an occasional coat of preservative on my outer shell."

Clarence had obviously given the matter plenty of thought, and knew what he wanted. He walked into the corner and Jeremiah quickly said good-bye and turned him off, without making too much of a ceremony of it. He had always hated funerals.

But once the rasping croak of Clarence's voice stopped grating on his eardrums, Jeremiah discovered very quickly how much he missed his old companion. He spent the next few days

sitting around the chalet, barely eating and hardly caring whether it was day or night. It was surprising how much he hurt on the inside. And that nibbling at the edge of his mind was back again, now that he was no longer busy. This time the thought had real teeth.

Almost all the people of his age group were happier, better resigned to their fate, more satisfied with their lives, than himself. Why? Because they had set goals for themselves and lived to reach them. Because they had accepted life as something to live, not fret about, and given no thought to immortality. They could look back on their accomplishments, whether large or small, and feel content. He had not fulfilled his major goal in life.

But there was more to it than that. Somehow they had known in their bones what he had discovered only after years of searching, that the universal end of any individual's life was death. The species could go on, but the separate members of it died. Therefore they did what they could in the time they had. He had spent his whole life attempting to avoid death. And it had been a useless effort. He needed no medical expert to tell him the end was approaching.

Jeremiah spent the next few days on the sun-deck, eating enough to keep his strength up and exploring his own memories. Some were very sharp and clear, others—most of the thirty years in space—a little faint. (It was a good thing Clarence had been along, and recorded it all. Human senses could not absorb the strange and new all that easily.) Eventually he was back to his childhood, where only a few scenes were still easily visualized, and finally he reached the funeral of his grandfather Johnson.

On the way back Jeremiah reacquainted himself with the obsessive

fear of death shared by Herb and Apple Johnson. When he reached his grandfather in his coffin it all came together, and he realized his life had been shaped by his parents and his early experiences. He had acted as he must; the compulsion had been built into his young mind.

The thought that he could blame his parents made Jeremiah feel somewhat better. They had obtained little satisfaction from life, and passed their unhappiness on to him. He had spent his years acting out someone else's fears and hopes. In a sense, they had cheated him out of a life of his own.

The next day after this easing of his mind a publisher's representative dropped in, to iron out a few details in the multimedia memoirs. She was a slim, quick young woman with short curly black hair and a dazzling smile. The full whiteness of it lit up his study when she spoke of his long journey. "What a fantastic life! All those thousands of planets you visited, and the aliens you met! The places no other human eye has seen, the smells and sights and sounds! Oh, if I had half your nerve, could go to a tenth of the places you've been. . ."

Jeremiah blinked several times—she was hard to keep in clear focus—and muttered and stumbled through his disclaimers. "Oh, the planets . . . all alike, after a time . . . desert here, forest there . . . avoided the really bad ones—no one there. . ."

But the pretty young woman refused to accept his lower evaluation of the long trip, and bubbled and smiled and brightened his life for the rest of the day. Eventually she got the concessions she had been sent for, and left.

Jeremiah dug out a copy of the tapes he had supplied, and played a few of them on the chalet's sensory wall screen. Some of those planet land-

ings were rather nice, really...

But the tapes refreshed his memory, and the girl's genuine admiration had given him a new perspective. He had been a few more places than most, seen a bit more of the galaxy... perhaps exchanged viewpoints with a larger number of life forms than the diplomats, picked up a little extraterrestrial biology not even dreamed of by colleagues... the thought swelled and grew like the light from one of the several expanding nova he had witnessed in his travels. *Hey! I've really done a lot more than those timid friends who stayed on Earth!*

With the thought came a long-sought contentment. His life had been dedi-

cated to a single goal, which he had failed to reach, but in many ways he had lived it to the fullest. Herb and Apple Johnson had not caused him to be cheated after all.

Jeremiah Johnson walked carefully into the study—his bones felt fragile—and looked at Clarence, standing tall and immobile in his corner. He nodded—it seemed fatuous to speak—and stepped outside, into the chaise's small garden of alpine flowers. But this tamed and ordered universe was not fitting to his need. He kept going, down a short slope and into the true forest.

The wilderness closed around him, the older one of green growth and

ragged mountain peaks, the type in which his namesake had created a legend. His own sojourn had been among a wilderness of stars, and they drew him now. He walked slowly deeper into the woods, away from his neighbors on the cool slopes.

Ahead, the sun was sinking slowly in the west. Soon this high country would be in shadow, and the stars appear.

He had created an enduring new legend, that of Jeremiah Johnson, who sought eternal life among the stars. In a way, he had found his immortality. And when the stars came out this night, he would return to them.

Jeremiah marched steadily on, watching the shadows grow, and darken. ★

AZLAROC

(Continued from page 47)

shown a concocted show, gotten to believe in the unbelievable. But why should they take such pains to fool him?

No, the recorder could not possibly have been planted out there in the wilderness for him to find. It had been half buried in the matter of the Azlarocian surface, and no one had known that he was going that way.

But it was far more preposterous that the recorder could have snugly and snugly come to rest in a field of a hundred billion gravities, where not even an atom could remain intact. First the gross structure of any kind of matter would be whisked away, as if by some magician's gesture, and then the relatively fragile electron-orbits would be bent in and collapsed, and then the nuclei themselves. From weak to strong, all the orders of physics bowing down in turn before the Great God Gravity. Electrons mashed brutally into positive nucleons, nothing left but the neutron soup that made a neutron star, and that could still hold against a hundred billion gravities in this last stand before the ultimate collapse, the ultimate abyss.

What was left was a star (if one could call it that) maybe ten kilometers in diameter, with maybe the mass of the Sun. Radiating very little in the visible part of the spectrum, but an avalanche of radio waves and X rays and other wavelengths, in its furious searchlight beam that swept and pulsed with its rotation. Take up a cubic centimeter of its solid surface, if you can dig up what has some billions of times the strength of steel. Lift it on your thumbnail—yes, do that. Hundreds of millions of tons. Drop it off your imaginary thumbnail

onto the surface of the Earth and it will fall all the way through the hard solid Earth, like a rock through a cloud of thin vapor, and then fall back again toward the center.

Yet the recorder, wherever it had been, had obviously survived though its attendant robot had been lost.

Ramachandra stopped the action again. "Diaphanely reading?" he snapped.

Callisto was peering at the hologram through another instrument. "Impossible to get a good one," she answered, her voice lapsed and at the same time abstracted.

"We've got to be looking out onto that surface through the veils. All the veils. Damn near forty million of them. Nothing breaks them, but they can be stretched. And the recorders that didn't come back—some of them may have gotten out."

"Mr. Ramachandra." Dr. Callisto straightened. "I must in all conscience tell you I think it is far more likely that the other recorders were simply lost, destroyed, somewhere between here and the pulsar's surface. The second most likely possibility, in my opinion, is that they reached the surface of the pulsar and were not protected by the veils as this one seems to have been. Remember, ten-to-the-eleventh standard gravities, approximately."

"And is there a third possibility? Have you calculated that far?"

"All right. Yes, of course. I have as yet found no evidence that your theory is impossible. All the veils of Azlaroc were evidently shielding this recorder when it reached the pulsar's surface, and they might be enough to protect a man as well. It is still my opinion that the veils cannot be pierced by any matter, or broken by any force."

"Excuse me," Sorokin put in, "but in that case I do not see what all this has to do with getting a man out from under them."

Callisto's gaze shifted to him. "Have you studied topology, Mr. Sorokin? In the field of—"

"Don't bury him in technicalities," interrupted Ramachandra. "Sorokin, I asked you before if you know how the veils fall. What I meant was this: there is some disagreement among authorities, but it seems at least probable that now and again a veil falls in a looped manner, something like a sheet thrown carelessly upon a bed. In a sense we are still under it, but actually its outer surface, folded around, is what touches us; topologically we are still outside it. I think the veil of '476, your year and mine, fell in that manner; if that is so, it can be mathematically shown that all the people of our particular yeargroup are still outside it."

Sorokin knew a strange hollow feeling. "Then we might be able to leave."

"If we can locate the folding of the veil, and go around it."

Until this very moment Sorokin had thought himself contented here in self-imposed imprisonment. Now... "But what of all the other veils that have fallen on us since our first year?"

"You will be outside those, too," Callisto said, "if you are really outside your first year's veil, and can get around its folded edge."

"And where will the edge be?"

"Perhaps somewhere just underground, almost in reach. Perhaps on the surface of the neutron star. Perhaps in the black hole."

Sorokin blinked. If he could believe that the recorder had survived the pulsar's surface, why should he not swallow any other scientific incredibility? But, viewing matters the other way, he might do better to reject the recorder's evidence if it required him to accept the proposition he now spoke aloud: "One end of an object is here and the other end there? One end inside a black hole and the other out?"

"If the veils of Azlaroc are objects,

yes." Ramachandra was getting his locomotive look again. "I tell you, men need not qual before the seemingly infinite powers that oppose them. How does a mathematician manipulate an infinite number?" He turned his gaze briefly on Callisto. "Pick up another infinite number and beat it over the head with that. Force it into the shape you want. Right?"

Her attitude seemed to say that she did not necessarily agree, but neither was she going to argue.

"All right, don't answer. But stripped of your scientist's legalistic precession, that's what it all comes down to. I know I'm dealing with physical reality here, not some mathematician's invention. But the principle's the same. If I can't generate the power I need to pull me free from Azlaroc, I'll put a harness on a greater power to do it." The matter settled, not that it had ever been in doubt, he turned back to the hologram.

After some eleven minutes on the surface of the neutron star, during which time it seemed to make several shifts at instantaneous speed to different locations on the surface (with each shift the starstreaks and their reflections changing angles in the black, glistening mirror below), the recorder was somehow sucked back into the dark portal in space from which it had emerged, and thence back to the racing bands of light. Some three hundred and seventy standard days after it had left, it was back on the surface of Azlaroc. Its eye-positioner still functioned phototropically, and when Sorokin came into sight its eye was above ground and it centered the hologram on him. By that time it was some fifty or sixty centimeters down from the top of Ruler Ridge.

"I'm going, then. I'm going to take the chance." Ramachandra with a slap of his hand shut off the hologram, and the room's lights restored themselves to normal. "I intend to view the rest of this later, Sorokin, to see if you really brought the device straight to me, as you said. For the moment I'll assume you did, and ask you a question: Are you coming with me, away from Azlaroc and back to the great world?"

"Down into that subduction tunnel? Across the neutron star, looking for a folding in that veil, just to see if we can rejoin the aging universe? And if we don't find the folding on the pulsar, I suppose we'll look into the black hole as well. How are we going to recognize a fold in the veil if we should come upon it?"

"To answer your last objection first, we'll have some specialized instruments along. And if we locate the edge of the fold, no matter where, we should be able to stretch it back with us into

that space of blue light-bands, from which an exit into normal space can be arranged. To answer your other questions: yes, yes, and yes. Add another yes if I have left one out. Look here." With a vast gesture he seemed to scatter machines and hired scientist out of his way and draw Sorokin into a close conference above the surface of a small table. "You and I are year-mates here, so one of us can go exactly where the other goes, as far as veils are concerned. Just coincidence? At this stage in my life I doubt if such a thing exists in a pure form, where human beings are concerned at any rate. Two people going will have a better chance than one of overcoming unforeseen obstacles. Besides . . . there is another reason why I don't want to go alone."

"Will I come with you? Why, it seems insane, but yes." Ever since the chance of leaving Azlaroc had acquired some reality, however tenuous, Sorokin had had the feeling that his own life was passing through a singularity, a condition where the old laws failed to hold, into a new stage where nothing was quite what it had been. Now he saw with bitter clarity that a man who spent his time roaming deserts and trying to be an adventurer had made a grave mistake to settle on all-but-changeless Azlaroc.

He wanted to be an adventurer, but did he really want adventures? Already he perceived the difference. Later the perception would be much more forcible.

He had surprised Ramachandra with his answer, stalled the locomotive for the moment. "Fine," was all that Ramachandra said, and then reached out to shake his hand.

They had the money to hire the best workshops and men available from all the yeargroups on the world, and the suits of armor were got ready just in time. Ramachandra wanted to begin his attempt before the next veil fell, as Callisto's calculations showed that their chances would be at least marginally improved thereby. A ship was kept waiting to carry her offworld at once, out of the veil's path should it begin to fall prematurely as sometimes happened at this season. She had no intention of being trapped.

Their custom built armor, as Ramachandra explained, was not to help them survive the neutron star, against the powers of which they could hope for no help save that which the veils themselves might give; and only partially was the armor meant to help them during their passage through Azlaroc's solid underground. It had to do that, of course, keep them uncrushed and at a reasonable temperature, and

supplied with air and water, while the inner layers of the world hugged them at a few thousand tons per square centimeter of the armor's surface. But also the suits would have to see them through their hoped-for emergence into space, free of veils and at some planetary distance between Azlaroc and the pulsar, and of course outside the black hole's lethal Schwarzschild radius. In space the armor must be proof against terrible onslaughts of radiation, and each suit would act as a miniature spaceship, to get the men down on Azlaroc again as safe and free as tourists. All these requirements for the suits were difficult, but not unreasonable, not after men had voyaged in space for thousands of years and had the knowledge gained in all that time to draw upon.

As in all of his affairs, Ramachandra did his best to maintain secrecy. He wanted no gaping crowds to follow him across the desert and behold his immersion in the trench. Callisto was to announce the adventurers' departure after it had been accomplished, and in half a year the ships routinely passing in and out from Azlaroc would be alerted to begin looking for their signals in space, that they might possibly be picked up there without having to get back down to the surface on their own. Also perhaps his employer had business or personal reasons for secrecy at this point; Sorokin never learned. For himself it did not matter. He realized that among the people he knew fairly well on Azlaroc there was no one whom he felt compelled to notify of what he was about to attempt. And the people outside, the people he knew elsewhere in the galaxy, the ones he had long ago despaired of ever seeing again . . . well, they would be changed by now, of course. People out there aged faster.

Time enough to notify them when he was out, was free again.

The two of them, Ramachandra and Sorokin, headed west across the desert from the city in a flying machine, some weeks after Sorokin's new employment had begun. Already in the vehicle when they boarded it, besides their bulky armor and a few small items, was a shape covered by cloth and as big as a sizable table. Ramachandra said nothing about it and Sorokin did not ask.

The most dustless, trackless plain unrolled behind them as their flyer hurtled westward under the low sky at a speed that rapidly mounted to thousands of kilometers per hour. Automatic baffles ran out on its airfoils to deaden the shock wave it dragged along the narrow space between the land and sky. Callisto had remained

behind in the city, spaceships near, refusing to take the chance of being marooned on Azlaroc by a possible early falling of the veil. She remained in television contact with Ramachandra as he flew, briefing him on the results of last-minute tests on the armor, and the results of her latest calculations.

The three principal bodies in the Azlaroc system were approaching nearly the same relative positions they had been in when the surviving recorder was carried down into the trench by a robot.

"And be sure to send some dead mass of a few hundred kilograms ahead of you," Callisto cautioned. "I know I told you that before, but I reiterate because it seems to be very important. Did you provide yourself with something?"

"I did," Ramachandra glanced once over his shoulder at the massive slab, with a draped, uneven upper surface, that rode behind them in the cabin. "It won't be long now. I think I see blacksky ahead."

Only unusual wanderers like Sorokin ever came this far across the plains. There was no physical reason why men could not live in sight of the blacksky, or even live directly under it if they brought lights of their own. The air and temperature beneath it were the same as those beneath the sky of light. But psychologically, to live under blacksky seemed to be practically impossible. Imagine the darkest, most ominous thunderstorm of Earth. Imagine the totality of Sol's eclipse, and the deepest night beneath a cloud of poisonous volcanic ash. Multiply the effect of terror by whatever factor will overload your nerves. Thus the blacksky, cutting off about half of Azlaroc's vast surface from the use of men.

Once, in a period of something akin to suicidal madness, Sorokin had journeyed toward it and under it. First in a wheeled vehicle that took days to race him this far across the plains; then by foot, his vehicle left waiting, open-doored, in the lifeless and silent wilderness where no one was going to come along to bother it.

He had kept repeating to himself that there was nothing in or under blacksky that would be intrinsically harmful or especially dangerous. What looked like terrible cloud, was only a failure, for various well-understood reasons, of the radiation that otherwise caused the "sky" of Azlaroc to give the impression of yellow and mildly overcast daylight. Blacksky was barely in sight ahead of him when he stopped the vehicle, but it seemed to leap closer with every stride as he began to walk toward it.

He had no light with him. He had no

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light.

He kept on walking until the appalling pall of it was up to his zenith, stretching to his right and left in a fuzzy boundary of mild collision with the living glow. And then he faced on into the dark and walked some more. He was terrified, and didn't understand why he was making himself do this. Through sheer fascination with his own terror. And the knowledge that he could go back, yes, he could turn around at any time.

The faint diffuse bandwork of his own shadow strode ahead of him, cast by the light of living sky behind. But beyond a short distance ahead he could see nothing. He moved beyond terror to—something else.

He walked thus for a distance that under ordinary circumstances would have exhausted him, stumbling over the smaller spheres and pyramids of the landscape when the light grew too bad to see at all. For a long time he was afraid to turn back and see how far he was getting from the light. When at last he turned, there seemed hardly more than a silver of brightness along the base of the eastern sky.

It was enough. He had satisfied whatever demon had driven him to this remote edge of the humanly habitable. Now almost relaxed and able to feel his exhaustion, he walked toward the light. After a while, as the light grew high in the sky again, some feeling of terror returned, and he had to run with the pressure of the Night behind him, as if it could pursue him . . .

Now in the flyer, he and Ramachandra didn't need to go under blacksky to reach the subduction trench. Sorokin supposed it would have made no difference whatever to Ramachandra if they had. Why should it, to a man who was willing to try the surface of the neutron star?

They landed within a few score meters of the trench, and with the help of powered hand-lifters soon emptied the vehicle of all their gear, including the great slab, which Sorokin discovered now was stone. Not the beaten, homogenized world-stuff of Azlaroc, matter with all the fight seemingly knocked out of it, but textured, beautiful material from somewhere out in the broad cosmos. It was white stone marbled with subtle veins and streaks of varying shades of brown. And when Ramachandra casually pulled the covers aside, Sorokin saw that the stone was carved in the form of a giant, a mortuary sculpture somewhat larger than life, depicting a man and woman supine in death, their lightly draped bodies both of heroic mold. The man was Ramachandra, the woman unknown to Sorokin, but beautiful.

Ramachandra treated the statuary

as if it were any other mass of a few hundred kilograms, about to be used as a kind of ballast. With Sorokin's help he positioned it near the lip of the purple-floored subduction trench. As soon as it was settled on the ground it began to creep perceptibly toward the place where it was going to disappear.

"Let's get the suits on," Ramachandra said. He was watching his partner closely now, as if he thought some last-minute reluctance possible. But Sorokin was moving to get ready.

"So you are using that," Callisto said from the television screen. Her eyes appeared to be turned toward the giant. Its stone had evidently been brought to Azlaroc within a few years of Sorokin's own arrival, for he could see the details of the carving with almost perfect clarity.

Ramachandra grunted. "Any reason why we shouldn't use this?"

"From my scientific point of view? No."

"You said heavy stone would be ideal. All right. Callisto, we're just leaving the flyer here. When you make your announcement of our departure you can send someone to get it, or do as you like."

"I'll see that it's picked up. Ramachandra, you have about one minute to stand in the trench."

"Time to get into the suits."

The suits were giant-sized on the outside, with servo-powered mechanical limbs. The internal space for the wearer, or occupant, was well protected and relatively small.

They got into the suits and then it was indubitably time to go. The huge sculpture had tipped on end into the trench, and the man and woman were going down side by side, headfirst, looking ludicrous rather than heroic now with their giant marble feet sticking up into the air. As Sorokin watched, the stone seemed to accelerate in its downward passage, like a doomed ship sinking into water.

Looking at each other steadily, the two men marched to the trench and stepped into it with their mechanical feet.

"Do you feel fear, wanderer?"

"No more than you do, man of power."

"I think I have guessed right about you, Sorokin. You are going toward the same goal that I am, but for different reasons."

"According to our agreement, my pay continues until this is over."

It was the first time that Sorokin had heard his employer laugh. "Very well. Until you are back on the surface of Azlaroc, one way or another. See to it, Callisto."

"Very well, sir."

The stone carving was now com-

pletely gone. The lips of the trench made a grating sound as they sagged closed again above it. Ramachandra's suit was now submerged to its knees, and Sorokin was in somewhat deeper. He had no unusual sensations so far, but it was disconcerting and at the same time rather elating to realize that he was going to lead the way. Now the level of the trench's bottom reached his suit's crotch. The last moment at which he might have changed his mind and scrambled out had probably gone by. But it was all right. For the immediate future his suit was very probably capable of protecting him, and beyond that he did not try to think.

He was sinking faster.

Ramachandra looked down with apparent irritation at being made a follower. "Sorokin, I would suggest you dose yourself with Chronotran before imprisonment in the rock"—it wasn't really rock, of course, and here for the first time Sorokin thought he had caught his employer in an error brought on by nervousness—"has bored you seriously. The experts say the drug is more effective when taken before the time of real need."

"I'll take some soon, then. Thank you for the suggestion. See you down below. Or up above."

If either Ramachandra or Callisto had any more advice for him just then, he could not hear it. The purplish bottom of the trench flowed up like water around his faceplate, and he was going down.

Only a few moments later, when it came to him that this was just the kind of darkness he would have experienced out at the nadir of blacksky, did fear begin to take hold of him. With a curling of his limbs he brought himself entirely inside the central chamber of his suit, and then he took some Chronotran. The drug did not kill fear, but gave one control over the subjective sense of time; moments of joy or tranquility might be tremendously prolonged, while times of dreary boredom or pain could be as much compressed.

It seemed to Sorokin that the blackness around his suit, and the sense of overwhelming pressure whenever he tried to use its servo-powered limbs, lasted only a little while. Never mind that the figures on his trip recorder added up to scores of days, or that his body went again and again through routines necessary to maintain health. Almost before he had time to anticipate a change, change was around him, in the form of the same bands of blue-white radiance that he had seen in the hologram. A glance at instruments showed him that the pressure and the radiation flux outside his suit had both climbed enormously. He was surprised to see that the temperature, so far at

least was going down.

He gave himself the antidote for Chronon, wanting to be ready for action when required. Shortly afterward he caught sight of the giant moving ahead of him through blue-white space, in the direction from which the transverse bands of light seemed to flow. Spinning very slowly as it moved, it trailed something like a shockwave, within the boundaries of which his suit of armor rode.

Working the suit's legs and arms again, he found he could maneuver amid this medium of light like a swimmer in thick water. Turning his suit with padding motions, he saw another like it. Ramachandra's, come tumbling slowly after him from the direction in which the bands of light marched off to disappear. One thing that surprised Sorokin was that he continued to maintain an "up" and "down," not only as a matter of visual orientation, but as if his suit had an actual artificial gravity of its own like a large spaceship, "down" being permanently toward its feet. Ramachandra had discussed the suit's systems with him thoroughly, and no artificial gravity had been mentioned. It must, therefore, be some effect of the environment.

The speeding bluish stripes of light that formed his visual world were now repeating the sequence Sorokin had witnessed in the hologram, narrowing and widening, with what seemed to be different layers of stripes making moiré patterns that had not been visible in the recording—patterns that jarred and jumped with each measured gigantic heart-throb of the pulsar. And now with somehow unexpected suddenness the singular contraction came, to pinch his whole world down to a mere point of light.

"By all the veils!"

Sorokin was standing upon the starry universe of bluish arcs, and holding the neutron star above his head. Then he realized that he had come out onto the star's surface upside down, while the gravity inside his suit maintained its orientation toward his feet. He moved his arms and legs and tipped the world around him until his feet were down. Wrapped and shielded within all forty million veils of Azlaroc, he stood untouched, unharmed, upon the spinning pulsar's surface. In a moment he understood that he had been brought to one of the poles of its rotation, for the star-circles lay all parallel to the horizon.

A few paces away, the giant drifted almost buoyantly, only one corner of it dragging on the mirror surface that was a neutron solid with billions of times the rigidity of steel. The surface was seemingly as smooth as if machined, all the way out to the hori-

zon. The highest mountain on the star should be just big enough for a man to stub his toe on it and trip, and to climb that mountain, to move a human's mass upward a few centimeters in this gravity, should take a lifetime's effort from a long-lived Azlarocian settler. Not that a human should be standing here at all. If the tidal forces did not shred him into atoms, and the gravity haul his particles indistinguishably into the proton mass, then the electrical forces generated within the spinning, superfluid core should blast him outward as a cloud of X rays, melded with the pulsar's searchlight beam of radiation as focused by its incredible magnetic field.

Ramachandra was coming toward him over the surface now, suit enclosed in a vaguely visible, transparent bubble, walking like a man underwater or in low gravity as he worked inside his suit with the instruments that were supposed to find the fold in their year-veil. His lips were moving, but no sound or signal came through the multiplex communication system to Sorokin.

"I can't hear you," he said when Ramachandra looked at him, and lip-read the other's answer: *Nor I you.*

Ramachandra turned away then, briefly, and approached the sculpture, which was also enclosed in an almost imperceptible bubble of some force. When he reached out one of his suit's metallic hands toward the carved woman, the entire giant with its bubble instantaneously disappeared at the first touch. Part of Ramachandra's suit-hand vanished at the same moment, and from the metal stump there sprang a sudden glow, more intense than any of the flares that occasionally appeared on the surrounding surface of the star. The brightness of the flaring metal, which was probably undergoing some thermonuclear reaction, slowly declined.

Now bearing a coruscating firework in one hand, Ramachandra turned imperturbably back to Sorokin. Don't try to touch helmets for communication, he mouthed.

"I won't. What are your plans now?"

The fold isn't here, so I'm going on. The black hole will be rising soon, and I intend to follow the lines of force of the veils in its direction. It seems the suit's drive will easily carry me. Whatever kind of a balance of forces we're riding here...

Nearly, the star flared, brighter than before. Then again far off, then farther still, and yet again beyond the near horizon. A shudder of the starscape came and went, that Sorokin saw but could not feel. Perhaps a quake had brought a mountain down, and speeded up the pulsar's rotation by

some fraction of a microsecond.

"I'm not going on, Ramachandra. Not into a black hole. Even if we can survive here..." Sorokin ended with a gesture of hopeless pessimism.

I know you're not My second reason for bringing you along. All I ask is that you take back word of what you see me do. You need only wait here a few more minutes and the forces that brought us here will bear you back again, to somewhere on Azlaroc. If you're lucky you'll survive. Ramachandra smiled. And collect your pay.

Sorokin could think of nothing to say. An impassable gulf had opened between him and the other man.

Ramachandra was consulting his instruments. *Black hole's rising now.* He nodded in the direction over Sorokin's shoulder but when Sorokin turned he found that the ultimate abyss offered almost nothing to see. Maybe a momentary squiggle in the blue arcs of one or two stars.

If Ramachandra had had anything more to say, Sorokin had missed it. He stood watching now as the other man's suit, moving now under its own power, rose past him...

No, there were some last words coming after all, for Ramachandra delayed enough to turn. *If I go into it—for good—*

"Yes?"

Well, I'll be joined by quite a crowd, eventually. That's all. The holes are going to coalesce and eat the rest of the universe, you know. In a few billion years.

His suit was soon out of sight amid the starstreaks of the sky.

Four minutes later the return tide came, and bore Sorokin into the striped space of blue light that bent abnormally between the worlds.

"Then do you think he actually went into it?" Miletus Millbrae asked. He had some time ago forgotten cautious incredulity and was asking questions without hesitation.

Sorokin drained a drink, and gestured for another. "I think he went on into it, yes. Unless he found a folded edge of veils before he got that far. My recorder's in my suit outside; I don't know how much it'll show in support of what I say. But the suit is working fine, it carried me back to town from Ruler Ridge. This is my first stop. I've got to find Callisto. I thought she was going to have some kind of watch posted along Ruler Ridge in case we—either of us—came back that way."

"You were with him, with Ramachandra," said a woman who had come into the place sometime during Sorokin's recital. "And this is your first stop, coming back."

He looked over at her. "Yes." The

rest of the people were attentively silent.

"Then you don't know."

He started two questions and aborted them both before they reached his lips. Then he said: "Ramechandra's back."

"For almost ten days now." But there was more to be told.

HENDERSON

(Continued from page 49)

ODYSSEY: Who are you?

HENDERSON: I'm two me's. One me is just me—name, address, height, weight, place of birth. The other me is the writer. Consequently the first me has all the statistics; the writer has none. That way I can accept and enjoy the pleasant letters I get about my stories, be pleased that the writing has had the success it has had; although the business of earning a living often gets in the way of it so the writing has to go into abeyance until time permits. Still, the duality makes me very shy of meeting people who "want to meet" me. They meet the un-writing me—never the writing me.

Statistically speaking, however—I've always been mountain conscious since I was born in the foothills of Santa Catalina mountains near Tucson, Arizona. We lived mostly with Grampa and were beguiled by stories of the family being driven out of old Mexico by Pancho Villa's men. If they'd stayed they'd have to give up their arms, which would have been suicide.

Mama used to sing us to sleep in the house we helped tromp mud to make adobe bricks to build—with old songs like *Just a Song at Twilight*, *Mighty like a Rose*, *Three Leaves of Bread*, or tell us stories about Joseph-sold-into-Egypt or David and Goliath until we fall asleep.

We moved a lot—twelve grade schools—but the mountains were always around somewhere. It was quite an experience to get back into the midwest—long after I was grown—and see the sky sitting down on the land full circle.

There were five of us: three girls and two boys. I'm the oldest girl, and second in the family; the only one of us who graduated from college. I was reared a Mormon—both grandfathers and great grandfathers had more than one wife—but I'm a Methodist now. One of the things about Methodism is that you can feel at home in any worship service. You may not agree with some tenets, but as long as the love of God is there, you can feel comfortable.

I graduated from Phoenix Union High School in Phoenix, Ariz.; got

"Callisto and her group won't let out much information," a man offered, "but it's known that they dug something out of the ridge ten days ago, and supposedly it has been at least tentatively identified as him. His suit, at least, presumably with him inside. Enlarged, somehow, and holding what looks like a small bright light in one hand."

my BA from Arizona State University (it was Arizona Teachers College, then). Got my MA at the University, too, and since graduation, about twenty-four Graduate hours. Mostly languages and literature. And, yes, even with the Master's, I still teach first grade. I have no desire for the upper grades. It's more fun to count to ten for my children in English, Spanish, French, German, Japanese, and Russian.

I can get along with my Spanish, French, and German when traveling, and learned what little Japanese I have (counting and Thanks) when I taught at one of the Japanese Relocation Camps during WW II. I used my French and German on an airbase in France for two years (1956-58); and I use my Spanish all the time with my kids. I think our school is about 65% Mexican. (It tickles me when on Tuesdays and Thursdays we go through our "flag information" to where I say, "Another name for our flag—" and right after Old Glory, one of my boys always shrieks, "La bendita!")

Where was I? Did I mention I was married seven years; that there were no children; and that we were divorced? Or that my mother died while I was in France. My father now lives in Seattle with my step-mother. My older brother in Phoenix and my sister in Tucson—and Eloy is midway between—so I yo-yo back and forth on weekends. I'm claustrophobic about staying in the same place I work when I'm not working.

Right now I'm at Pinetop, Ariz., about ten miles from Showlow, and 7200 feet up in the hills. I own a summer cabin where I stay, mostly alone. For hobbies I like to do all sorts of needle-work, and am currently going through a collect-quilt-patterns phase along with making afghans. I don't sew anymore, but once I made most of my dresses. I collect, too. Just about anything small that stays still long enough: thimbles, printed toys to be stuffed and sewed, old cookbooks, old needlework magazines, calendar towels. I've been through the rock hound phase, the lapidary phase, the digging for bottles phase, doll collecting. I love thrift shops and patio sales. And I like to bake, although I hate dishwashing. And I like to walk end disconcert my friends by parking way out in the parking lot of shopping centers instead of

"Dead?"

The woman made a gesture difficult to read. "I've heard there's movement. Life, perhaps. But wrapped in a loop of forty-nine times forty-nine, twenty-four hundred and one vells."

Sorokin said eventually: "He'll go again." ★

comfortably close.

About the only fiction I read anymore is detective and crime stories. I don't like the tough guy stories or international intrigue, but Agatha Christie, Upfield, Nagio Marsh, Merric, and Dorothy Seyers.

Hoo boy! Writer's cramp!

Now, for the Writer Me—I was writing poems and stuff from the third grade up. We learned poetry in them days. Wordsworth's "I wandered lonely as a cloud" and Longfellow's (?) "There is a forest primeval/The murmuring pines etc.". So I started writing poems. The first time I really tried to write for publication was in the late 40's. "Come on, Wagon" was my first published short story, except for a bad one in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

I haven't written a novel because I never had that much to say; nor the time to say it in; but I'm trying to get started on one this summer. Not S.F. or fantasy. Suspense.

ODYSSEY: You speak of two "me's": the statistical "me", (woman, teacher); and the writer "me". How does the writer "me" rank in relation to the other? Is she to be taken seriously?

HENDERSON: The writer "me" is a person for whom I can accept praise happily, and for whose successes I can rejoice without bragging. The statistical "me" is the everyday one that, a stranger seeing, would never suspect was AN AUTHOR! which is piquant in its own way. Perhaps the writer "me" is more nearly what I wish I were most of the time. Maybe the unexpected blossom atop, while my toes squish in the humdrum mud.

ODYSSEY: How do you work? What are your writing habits?

HENDERSON: I write in long-hand with soft leaded big primary pencils—usually leaning on one elbow on my bed or, if it's handy, sitting in an overstuffed chair with my legs over one arm and a book or magazine on my lap to write on. I write on both sides of usually yellow paper (second sheets). I type when I can no longer think up excuses, and revise as I go; then revise the rough draft; then retype the story and heave a large sigh when I can put -30-.

ODYSSEY: Why do you like mysteries? Why do you feel the urge to write one? And how do the two genres, sf and mystery, compare as litera-

tures? And I might add—do you regard sf and mysteries as literature proper, or as intellectual vices?

HENDERSON: I don't care for the puzzle ones as much as the suspense ones. As I said, I don't care for the spy-intrigue ones, or the tough private eyes, or the ones with sex grafted on every sixth page. I like mysteries because they're easy to read. I usually read them at one sitting. The suspense ones that I like best can be re-read: Christie, Mable Seelye, Sayers. I read happily. They have enough interesting story so it doesn't matter if I remember the solution ahead. And I like mysteries because often they have authentic backgrounds of various industries or professions or areas of the world that are new to me. I can fill in the gaps of my own knowledge in such stuff as mountaineering, banking, insurance adjusting, agriculture in England, the Australian Outback, etc.

As literature? I'd be inclined to believe mysteries are more nearly literature than S.F. is. It depends on your definition of literature. My definition is that literature reflects the life of a given period. That's rather loose but in my re-reading of mysteries reaching back into the 20's and 30's I am struck by the social attitudes that contrast with ours. The racial biases, the class distinctions, what people ate, how they dressed, what they considered good and bad. We have periods of time crystallized in these books.

S.F. doesn't qualify on the basis of my definition because it doesn't reflect any given period. I decided to write a suspense novel for the same reason I decided to write S.F. because I ran out of good ones to read! I started reading S.F. when I was about twelve, with the old *Astounding Stories* and *Amazing Stories*, and fantasy with the old *Weird Tales*. Second-hand, of course. And, from the library, the Jules Verne books. I began to write it in 1947 or thereabouts. I knew I couldn't write technical stories, so I wrote about ordinary people, reacting to SF situations, or in the case of the "People", unusual people. My formula for a story is (quote from somewhere): Usual people in unusual circumstances, or unusual people in usual circumstances.

ODYSSEY: You said "sf doesn't qualify (as literature) on the basis of my definition because it doesn't reflect any given period (of history)." Then what does it do? What value is it to you?

HENDERSON: S.F., like Fantasy, is adult fairy tales. It gives people who are bound so tightly in conventional ruts by their profession, or just by the cussedness of things, a chance to dream—What if so-and-so weren't true? What would the world be like? S.F. presents the mind with possible or probable new frontiers, and goes on from there. S.F. is fun—or was

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when I used to read it aloud. And it stretches the brain and stimulates the imagination. Presupposing it is good S.F.

ODYSSEY: You said you wrote poetry? You have a characteristic poem for me?
HENDERSON: Poetry? Let me go look. Oh, dear! A characteristic poem? They vary, and, I might add, are much more autobiographical than my stories; even the Persona I adopt. But here's a small one:

Sic Transit

Because Change is the constant,
My heart's strength has spent

ETFF

(Continued from page 27)

have to do is take the elevator down to the first floor of the right wing and walk through the lobby to the elevator on the left wing."

"And that will take me up to 2954?"

"Not exactly," said the clerk. "You see, this hotel only has twenty-eight floors."

"Typical convention hotel," Steve muttered. "They always come up with a place laid out like this." He turned to the clerk. "But it does have elevators."

"Of course," sniffed the clerk. "Six cars for each wing. Just remember, though—those on the left only run up and those on the right only run down. But on both sides just one elevator is presently in operation, and even the one that runs up is pretty run-down. Of course, you can always use the escalators, but I suggest the stairs."

"Why?"

"The escalators aren't running."

Rick shrugged. "Never mind that—just give me our room number."

"Certainly, sir. It's 1623½."

"1623½? In which wing is that?"

"Neither."

"Neither?"

The clerk looked embarrassed. "I forgot to mention, the rooms ending in ½ are on the floors of the old annex, in the building around the corner."

"How can there be such a thing as an old annex?" Rick asked.

"Well, you see the management was smart. They anticipated there'd be overcrowding in years to come, so they put up the annex before they built the hotel. Actually, it was there all the time; used to be the county jail, but it was condemned."

"What about the inmates?"

"They were condemned, too."

"Oh, super!" Sherry tossed her blonde curls. "Never mind all that—we won't be staying in our room anyway. Just tell us where the convention is being held."

"Let me see, now." The clerk glanced

at a list before him. "The International Hog-Calling Association is on the fourth floor—lots of open windows up there, and they like to practice. The Chicken-Plucker's Union is on three, and the chickens are on the mezzanine—by the way, the mezzanine is downstairs in this hotel, because somebody mixed up the blue-prints—"

"We want the World Science Fiction Convention," Rick said.

The clerk looked at his list again and frowned. "It's not listed. You'll just have to look around."

"Look around?" Steve shook his head. "This isn't a hotel—it's a twenty-eight storey jigsaw puzzle! Don't you have a map or something?"

"Of course we have a map," said the clerk.

"Can we have one?"

"I don't keep maps at the desk," the clerk told him. "They're in the storage room."

"And where is that?"

"I don't know. I'm afraid I've never been able to find it."

"Knock it off," Sherry murmured. "We'll locate the Convention ourselves. Just wander around until we run into it."

And we did, though it wasn't easy. Somewhere we found a stairway leading up to a second level.

"Try this floor," Sherry said. "We'll just ask the first fan we meet."

Unfortunately, the corridors seemed deserted. We wandered through a labyrinth of halls without finding another soul. Finally I spotted a room with a sign on the door.

"Hey, look!" I said. "See what it says? Where *No Man Has Gone Before*. That must be the Star Trek Suite!"

"Let me find out," Steve muttered.

He went inside fast, and came out faster.

"What's the matter?" Rick asked.

"That wasn't the Star Trek Suite—it was the women's washroom!"

"You can't win 'em all," Sherry sighed. "But come on. Keep your ears open for the sounds of fanish voices."

As we rounded a corridor we heard a dreadful shriek.

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sudden noise is like a shaft of light.

I can't sleep in morning buses and have trouble sleeping in boats and planes because movement is noise is light, and who can sleep in such confusion! Darkness is silence. The new moon is a high thin sustained note. A full moon fills the night with sound; music if I'm happy, cacaphony if I'm in a bad mood.

Thinking it over it reminds me of something in, I think, "Turn the Page." "A part of the truth is sometimes a lie." I am as many people as there are people to react to me! ★

"Somebody's singing folk-songs! Hey, I wonder if Marion Zimmer Bradley knows about this?"

But the noise was not produced by folk-songs, nor was Ms. Bradley in evidence. At the end of the hall was a large open area filled with figures milling before a series of long tables. Behind the tables were seated a group of the most miserable-looking people I've ever encountered—wary, haggard, harried and harassed, with red-rimmed eyes and trembling hands.

"See, what did I tell you?" Sherry exulted. "It's the Convention Committee!"

"And the screaming—?"

"Fans, waiting to be registered. There's always some kind of hassle, you know. Fandom is a way of strife. Now just get in line and we'll get our badges."

Which we did, in less than two hours. My badge read Pete Boggs—Steve registered for me, and invented the last name on the spot. "Makes you sound like a Big Name Fan," he said. "They'll think you're Redd Boggs' brother."

They led me toward the stairway at one side. "Up we go, now," Rick said. "Committee tells me everything's on the third floor. Just think—in a moment you'll see your first real Worldcon." He frowned. "What's the matter?"

"I am thinking," I murmured. "Do you realize what this moment means to me? Ever since I discovered science fiction, I've dreamed of the time when I'd actually come to a convention. And now, all at once, I'm frightened. They say there are thousands of people up there—fans, authors, artists, editors, publishers—"

"Nothing to be scared about," Rick said. "Fans are just a bunch of hairy people like the ones you saw in the lobby. The authors are just the same, only hairier. You won't see any artists—they're all in the Art Show, sneaking around and drawing mustaches on each other's paintings. As for the editors, they're just here to be chewed-out on the panel sessions."

"But where are all the publishers?"

"Oh, they don't dare to come to these

affairs. If they did, they'd be lynched."

Sherry took my arm. "Come along, now, and don't be frightened. You're going to have a ball."

And that's exactly what I did, all the rest of the day. Sherry and Rick and Steve took me around and showed me everything.

How can I possibly describe the thrill of attending one's first convention? Just imagine the excitement of seeing thousands and thousands of real live science fiction fans gathered together in one place, all of them giving each other their autographs!

And the pros gave autographs, too. Out in the hall stood Isaac Asimov, big as life, signing copies of the Bible.

"He just arrived by car a few minutes ago," Steve said.

"You mean he drove here?"

"Asimov never takes a plane," Rick told me. "He believes that if God meant for people to fly, He'd have given them plane-tickets."

Going into the meeting-hall, we passed Lester del Rey, Poul Anderson, Gordon Dickson and Bob Silverberg. And there was Philip Jose Farmer, surrounded by a circle of fans who were asking him about his latest work "I'm doing a sequel to my Riverworld series," he said. "It's called 'Up the Creek.'"

Inside the meeting-hall, more thrills awaited me. Ray Bradbury was up on the platform, reading a long poem about a whale. When he finished, Robert Bloch followed him and read a two-line verse about a sardine.

At dinner, in the coffee-shop, Sherry pointed out other notables. "See that group over there?" she murmured. "That's Roy Lavender, Ted White, Fuzzy Pink Niven and Charlie Brown."

"What a color-combination!" I said. My eyes were even more dazzled when they were joined by Redd Boggs.

Back in the hall for the evening program, I heard Harlan Ellison reading a short story to the crowd. It was greeted with wild applause, so for an encore, Harlan read one of his novels.

Later in the evening we just wandered around looking at celebrities. I saw David Gerrold selling Tribbles, Ben Bova and Fred Pohl selling each other stories. There was Judy Lynn Benjamin and Ursula K. LeGuin and a woman named Parenthesis who, they told me, writes under the name of Leigh Brackett. And in one of the corridors a group of fans listened to an argument about the proper length of a story, carried on by Frank Belknap Long and Elliot Shorter.

I must say my newfound friends were good to me. Any request I made was carried out immediately; whatever I asked for, I got.

Sometimes, of course, it didn't work

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out. Just before they decided to turn in for the night, Sherry came up to me with two individuals—a petite redhead and a blond, balding man.

"Here they are," she said, proudly. "Bjo and John."

I acknowledge the introductions, then stared at them, baffled. "Where are my Tribbles?" I whispered.

"Sorry," Sherry said. "I thought you asked for Tribbles."

But I forgave her. It had been a long day, and we were all tired. "We'd better get some rest," I said.

As we made our way up to our room, famous figures danced around me in a daze. There was William Rotsler telling Frank Kelly Freas how to draw, a group of fans explaining to Roger Elwood how to edit an anthology, and Theodore Sturgeon holding forth on his famous Sturgeon's Law—"Ninety percent of everything is crud."

"Only ninety percent?" I murmured drowsily, as my friends made up a bed for me on the sofa.

Usually I can fall asleep immediately, but tonight was different. Maybe it was the strain of activating a human body—I wasn't accustomed to the limitations of just two arms, two legs, two eyes, two ears and a single itty-bitty little mouth. Or perhaps it was just the excitement.

But as I reflected on the matter, I realized there was more to it than that. I was beginning to feel just a wee bit neglected. Here were all these fans, kissing Terry Carr's hand, asking Larry Niven for a lock of his beard, listening in awe as Roger Zelazny spelled his last name for them. And none of them paid the slightest attention to me. Me, the only genuine extraterrestrial in the world!

It was my own fault, of course—I was the one who'd insisted that my identity couldn't be revealed. I hadn't reckoned with one mind-boggling fact; fandom is the carrier of a contagious disease. And I had been exposed to it here, all day.

I was suffering from the most dangerous of all human desires—the craving for egoboo.

What to do? As I'd told Sherry and Rick and Steve, I couldn't reveal my true name or place of origin—I'd made a solemn promise to my sponsors as a delegate of the Extra-Terrestrial Fan Fund. No matter what happened, under no circumstances could I speak for myself.

But the thought of spending two more days here, surrounded by flattery, adulation, and George Clayton Johnson, was too much to bear. There had to be some way of attaining recognition without violating my promise.

Then it came to me.

Actions speak louder than words.

Tomorrow, even though I couldn't tell them who I was, I'd show what I could do. And by the time this Worldcon was

over, I'd be a Big Name Fan, right up there with Chuck Crayne, Bruce Pelz and Mike Glickson.

I drowsed off to sleep with a happy smile on my face, lulled by the sound of screams from the corridor outside.

This time they were singing folk songs. . . .

Saturday morning I was up bright and early. My companions were still sleeping—Rick and Steve in bed, and Sherry slumbering in the place they'd so gallantly provided for her in the bathtub.

I tiptoed into the corridor without disturbing them and made my way downstairs. Strangely enough, the third floor was almost entirely deserted. The Art Show hadn't opened yet, the main meeting area was empty, and the only signs of life came from a smaller suite at the far end of the hall. As I stood near the doorway, listening to the feeble murmur of groaning voices, a tall man with a short mustache approached me.

"What's going on in there?" I asked. "Sefwa meeting," he said.

"Sef-who?"

"No—Sefwa. Science Fiction Writers of America. That's the group the professionals belong to."

I peered through the doorway at the small group huddled before a table which was set up at the end of the room. I recognized a few of the pale, drawn faces—Jerry Pournelle, Clifford Simak, James Gunn, Harry Harrison—as they mumbled to one another in hoarse whispers.

"What are they discussing?" I murmured.

"What do you suppose a science fiction writer would be discussing at this hour of the morning? Hangover remedies, of course."

I stared at my informant, and for the first time noticed the sheaf of magazines he clutched to his bosom, each bearing the gaudily-colored cover-painting of a horror-film star.

"Why, you must be Forry Ackerman!" I said.

He nodded, smiling.

I could only respond to the conditioned reflexes of my body. Beer had made me throw up; now, in the presence of this living legend, I had to gulp. Forrest J (no period) Ackerman is, of course, the best-known name in all the universe. From Aldebaran to Zoophilia his fame has spread; every sentient entity in the cosmos is aware of his fabulous fannish presence. And here I was, face to face with Mr. Science Fiction himself!

Suddenly all my resolutions vanished. Gone was my resolve to keep my real identity a secret, gone was the determination to maintain a false facade. If there was one person who deserved to know the truth, one person who was equipped to fully appreciate

an actual confrontation with an extraterrestrial, one person who would be thrilled beyond measure by such a meeting—Forry Ackerman was that man. He alone would appreciate the historic significance of this meeting, and he deserved to know. I must tell him, now.

"Mr. Ackerman," I said. "Your interest in famous monsters is a matter of record. But have you ever met one in the flesh?"

"Certainly," Ackerman smiled. "Christopher Lee, Boris Karloff, Donald A. Wollheim—"

"I mean a real monster." I gulped again. "What would you say if you had an opportunity to meet a genuine creature from another world?"

Forry's eyes danced a frug of anticipation. "You aren't putting me on?" he said.

"Suppose I could arrange it?" I asked. "What would you do?"

"I'd interview him for my magazine, for one thing," Forry said. "And get his autograph, and take him to see my collection, and —"

His mounting excitement was interrupted by the voice of a small fan who rushed up to us, panting and breathless. "Oh, Mr. Ackerman," he gasped. "I've been looking for you! I've just come from the Film Room, and —"

He stood on tiptoe, whispering something in Forry's ear. Ackerman smiled, nodded, and started to turn away.

"Where are you going?" I murmured.

"You'll have to excuse me, I'm afraid," said Forry. "This young man informs me that they're starting to screen a movie, and I can't miss it."

"But what about meeting the monster—the interview —?"

"Sorry," Forry shook his head. "That will have to wait. They're showing *Metropolis*. I've only seen it four hundred and eighty-seven times, and I've got to catch it again."

"Please, Mr. Ackerman!" I tugged at his arm. "Stop and think! I'm not kidding you—a real live monster —"

Gently, Forry disengaged himself. "You just don't seem to understand us movie fans," he said.

I watched him, open-mouthed, as he moved off.

My hopes vanished with him. Now I'd never see his expression as I told him the truth about myself. There'd be no write-up in his magazine, and no egoboo for me.

Egoboo.

The word still burned in my brain. There had to be some other way of attaining recognition. Surely, in a science fiction convention of this size there were all sorts of chances to establish my importance.

I started off down the hall. It was almost noon now and the corridor was gradually filled with fannish figures.

From various side-rooms came the sound of voices. Meetings were in progress.

Standing just outside an open doorway was a young lady wearing a Trekke T-shirt emblazoned with the legend, *Friends, Romans and Mr. Spock—Lend me your ears.*

I nodded at her as I approached. "What's going on inside?"

"Authors' panel," she told me.

My heart leaped. A science fiction writers' panel! Surely they, of all people, would be impressed if I revealed myself!

"What are they discussing?" I asked. "Alternate universes, other worlds, alien life-forms? Do you think they might be interested in actual contact with an extra-terrestrial being?"

"You don't understand," said the girl. "These happen to be New Wave authors. They're talking about sex, and ecology, and sex, and relevancy."

Over her words the voice of one of the panelists boomed in my ears from a table-microphone. "Four-letter the editors!" he cried. "Four-letter the publishers!"

"Fight on!" shouted a fellow-panelist. "Four-letter the agents and the distributors. And, while we're at it, four-letter the readers, too!"

There was a burst of wild applause from the audience. "Remember our slogan!" yelled the speaker. "Advocates of violence must be destroyed!"

The girl turned to me and shrugged. "You see?" she said.

"I hear," I told her. And moved off again. It was obvious that if I came up against the New Wave I wouldn't even create a ripple.

But there were other functions going on. Around the corner at the end of the corridor I found a meeting-room where another panel discussion was in progress. The group on the podium consisted entirely of females. Unobtrusively I edged my way to a chair at the rear.

A girl seated beside me turned and offered a disapproving stare.

"What are you doing here?" she whispered. "Don't you know this is a discussion-group for lady writers? The 're speaking on Woman's Lib.'"

"...hat's interesting," I said. "I've studied a little psychology and I know the problems of a woman's libido —"

"Woman's Liberation!" she snapped. "Listen, and maybe you'll learn something."

A strikingly handsome young woman was addressing the audience over the microphone.

"It's a conspiracy!" she declared. "Everyone knows that Hugo Gernsback was a malechauvinist pig. Ever since he started his science fiction magazine, the field has been totally usurped by men! They ignore the contributions of

all the great women science fiction writers—from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley to Julia Verne, Alice Huxley, Georgette Orwell, Roberta Heinlein and Kate Vonnegut, Jr. Just remember, it was we who put the Gai in Galaxy!"

I felt a surge of sympathy as she continued.

"We are entitled to proper recognition for our work, even if we have to girlcott every publisher in the field. We must take a stand against such masculine inventions as manned space-flights and the U.S. Mail Service! Forget history—what about herstory?"

It was all too true, and I found myself nodding in agreement. Not that nodding would help. There would have to be a more positive contribution, and suddenly the thought occurred to me—maybe I could make it. Even in this altered body of mine, I still retained certain powers. For example, if I gluxed —

Her voice rose shrilly. "Speaking for myself, I want — I am entitled — to everything a man has!"

She was right. I sat there, vorching, as her shrill voice continued.

"It's time for a change!" she said. So I gluxed her.

Suddenly the shrill voice deepened. She paused in mid-sentence, staring down at herself, and I knew I'd succeeded in granting her wish.

She knew it too—and so did the audience—as her hand went to her face and encountered the full beard.

As the crowd stared, pointed, milled and murmured in confusion, the speaker ran out of the room—perhaps she was going to get a shave.

I took advantage of the distraction to slip away myself. But at least I had the satisfaction of knowing I'd done one positive thing for the Woman's Lib Movement; certainly the speaker had moved quickly enough.

There was just one thing wrong; I still didn't have any personal egoboo. Next time I wouldn't be so modest about my achievements — if there was a next time.

Wandering through the now-crowded corridor, I halted at the entrance to another meeting room, attracted by the imposing figure of a young man wearing a metal helmet, a coat of chainmail, and an iron truss.

"Pardon me, sir," I said. "What's happening here?"

He stared at me in surprise. "You mean you haven't heard of our group — the Society For Anachronistic Creativity?"

Something about the name rang a bell. "Isn't that the organization whose members dress up in medieval costumes — young people interested in the Middle Ages? Don't they have tournaments and trials by combat with swords?"

He nodded. "Some of us have duel

personalities," he explained.

"Sounds familiar," I told him. "I must have read about one of your leaders; I think it was John Carter of Mars."

"You mean Lin Carter, don't you?" He gestured towards the assemblage. "He's inside with the others."

I entered, gazing in astonishment at the crowd of fans wearing knightly garb as though it were a daily occurrence. Never have I seen such an array of gorgets, tippets, nasars, bassinets, jupons, baudricks, pauldrons and palleles; just looking at them brought on an acute case of metal-fatigue.

It made me feel almost naked to appear here without armor, but instead of skulking in the rear of the room I took a seat right down in front before the platform. The first step towards obtaining egoboo is to be noticed, and this time I resolved to attract attention.

But at the moment everyone gazed through their visards at the speaker. The gentleman on the platform proudly identified himself as an aide-de-camp to L. Sprague deCamp, and he was expounding about a literary genre known as sword-and-sorcery.

Many of his references were unfamiliar to me — he kept mentioning characters called Fafnirs, Grey Mousers, and either an ancient hero or a modern villain whose name was Cohen the Barbarian. But I gathered that these stories dealt with combats between brawny adventurers and scrawny wizards — muscles versus magic. And something about the very phrase, sword-and-sorcery, sparked a notion of my own.

"Of course you must remember," the speaker continued, "that what we are dealing with here is pure fantasy, which has nothing to do with science fiction."

Before I realized it, my mind was made up and I was on my feet. "Not so!" I shouted.

The speaker frowned down at me. "What do you mean?" he said. "It's all myth and legend. Running people through with swords — using spells and incantations — surely this isn't the scientific approach?"

"Nothing is impossible," I told him. "Swords exist, and so does sorcery."

By this time the audience was staring at me. I felt the first heady pulsations of egoboo emanating from their interest, and it intoxicated me.

"Here!" I shouted, leaping to the platform. "Let me give you a demonstration."

The speaker had unbuckled his weapon — a long, two-edged, lethal-looking blade — and placed it on the table before him. Now I snatched it up and waved it.

"This is a sword," I said. "Now, observe!"

And before he could move, I drove

the deadly steel full-length into his chest.

As he staggered and fell back, the audience rose, screaming.

"And now, the sorcery!"

I was yelling at the top of my voice, but nobody heard me amidst the screams of the crowd.

Quickly, I glared the speaker, pulling the blade from his chest and leaving him unharmed; without as much as a scratch to show for his ordeal.

But no one saw my magic; the entire assemblage had turned tail and fled the room, their armor rattling in fright and flight.

And now, as the speaker gaped at me, open-mouthed, I realized I'd better follow their example.

"Help — murder — police!" he cried.

If he was offering me a choice, I'd take help. And the best way to help myself was to flee through the small door at the rear of the platform.

I found myself in another corridor, and quickly lost myself again around the corner, far from the maddening crowd.

Just to make certain of my escape I took the stairway up to the next floor. Here I halted and looked around, catching my breath and reassembling my scattered wits.

This, I realized, was apparently not the way to gain egoboo. All I'd succeeded in doing was frightening those fans out of their wits. If I wanted their acclaim, I'd have to offer them something more constructive. Next time I must remember to do something helpful.

And there had to be a next time, soon, before I got a reputation as a trouble-maker.

With that resolve I started off down the hall. As luck would have it, I blundered into a meeting of First Fandom.

For the benefit of those who are unfamiliar with the term, First Fandom consists of a group whose affiliation with science fiction goes back to before 1940 — people like Dave Kyle, Jack Williamson, Doc Barrett and Lou Tabakow. They gather annually at the Worldcons to reminisce about the Sense of Wonder, the Golden Age of Science Fiction, and the good old days when they were young.

As I listened to them crying into their Geritol about their misspent youth and how they wished they'd misspent more of it, I was seized with a kindly impulse.

And two minutes later I was running down the corridor once more. Behind me I heard only boos, not egoboo.

Somehow I'd goofed again.

This time I didn't stop scurrying until I was back downstairs. Here it was my intention to lose myself in the crowd, but almost immediately I sensed that

several fans were eyeing me suspiciously. Apparently rumors were already flying, and — from the way they muttered and pointed — might soon be followed by fists.

Unwilling to provoke a scene, I ducked into the nearest side-door and found myself in the Huckster Room.

The Huckster Room, for your information, is where the dealers set up their displays of fanish merchandise for sale — artwork, sculptures, movie memorabilia, comic books, foreign reprints and rare first editions of science fiction, and old magazines, dating back to the days when Doc Smith was only an interne.

It was fascinating to see the pulps in which science fiction started — truly a *Weird, Amazing, Fantastic, Startling and Astounding* array — and I couldn't help but respond to the *Thrilling Wonder* of it all.

Wandering down the aisles between the tables, I was inflamed by a desire to possess some of these goodies. Surely there could be no better souvenir of my visit than a genuine autographed copy of *The Outsider* and *Others* or a mint copy of a 1922 *Mickey Mouse Comics*.

I paused before a display of old horror-pulps and gazed greedily at titles known and loved by every trutlan: *Spicy Mystery*, *Salty Terror*, and *Over-Seasoned Adventure*. Suddenly I discovered the prize of them all — a Volume One, Number One issue of *Sexy Science*, with its famous cover illustration of a naked girl attacking a bug-eyed monster.

The dealer behind the table, a bit of a bug-eyed monster himself, leered at me and drooled encouragingly.

"That's Warm-Hearted Walter," whispered a teen-age fan at my side. "A hard man to do business with. He's still got the first nickel he ever stole."

"I don't care," I told him. "I've got to have this magazine!"

"I warn you," said the fan. "It'll cost you an arm and a leg."

"No problem," I said.

I was just starting to remove my arm when Sherry grabbed me from behind.

"So here you are!" she panted.

"Come with me!"

"In a moment — I've got business to attend to —"

"No you don't!" Sherry tugged at my shoulder. "We know all about your business."

Rick and Steve moved up on either side, apprehension in their eyes, and pulled me away.

"Hurry," Sherry murmured. "We've got to get you out of here before they find you!"

"They?"

"Don't try to cop out," Steve said.

"Everybody's heard about that hairy session with the women authors, and your run-in with the sword-and-sorcery

people."

They hustled me down the hall to the back stairs.

"Better take these and keep out of sight," Rick said.

"But I haven't done anything —"

"Oh no? What about the First Fandom meeting?" He glared at me accusingly as we mounted the steps.

"I can explain," I said. "When I heard all those elderly parties saying they wished they were young again, I just decided to help —"

"Turning them into babies was a bad idea," Sherry told me. "I understand they've already had to change Sam Moskowitz's diapers three times."

"Maybe I was a bit hasty," I sighed, turning to Rick. "Where are you taking me?"

"To the room. You'll be safe there. Besides, we've got to get our costumes ready for the Masquerade."

"The Masquerade?" I brightened. "This I've got to see."

"No way," Steve told me. "You're going to keep out of sight. If anyone spots you now, there'll be real trouble."

"But I can't miss the Masquerade," I said. "It's one of the highlights of the convention!" I nodded at Steve. "Couldn't I come with you if I were a costume too? Then nobody would recognize me."

"That's a thought," he conceded. "Let's see what we can do."

And we did. Once in the room, the trio donned their outfits. Sherry dressed as a witch, Rick put on a spacesuit, and Steve struggled into a metallic robot costume.

"What about me?" I said.

Sherry yanked a sheet off the bed. "You can wear this," she said.

"Who am I supposed to be — a member of the Ku Klux Klan?"

"You're a ghost, silly! Go ahead, put it on!" She nodded approvingly. "Now you're safe. Nobody will recognize you."

"But I want egoboo —"

"Never mind that. You're sticking with us, understand? And don't do anything to attract attention. When your turn comes, just walk across the stage."

"Just wearing a ghost costume won't win me a prize," I protested. "I should have some kind of an act. Maybe I could speak —"

"You don't even say boo!" Sherry told me, firmly.

"How about letting me sing, then?"

"Out of the question," Rick said. "We don't have any sheet-music."

Steve glanced at his watch. "Time to go," he said. "Now remember — you stay undercover."

The auditorium was crowded. We stood backstage amidst a motley crew of mummies, zombies, warlocks, galactic explorers and characters from various science fiction epics. And as I

stared through the eyeholes of my sheet, the Masquerade began. A committee-member handed each of us a number, and when it was called, its owner paraded out before the foot-lights.

At first I was excited, but as the affair continued I began to feel a twinge of disappointment.

Quite frankly, I'd expected more than this prosaic procession of armed warriors, bearded enchanters and members of the Star Trek crew. And the costumes seemed duplicated time and again. Sherry and Rick and Steve proceeded me, but I knew they didn't stand a chance. There were a dozen other witches, a score of space-men, and a whole regiment of robots. And now, as I glanced around at those remaining to be called out, I noted a host of ghosts. I wouldn't win a prize either, unless —

Unless what?

I'd given my word not to speak or sing or open my mouth in any way to attract attention. And I didn't have a little act worked up; a routine to impress the audience.

As a matter of fact, none of the contestants impressed me. Wenches and warlocks were all very appropriate to a fantasy festival, but this was supposed to be a Masquerade of science fiction.

Something was missing. Where were all the aliens — the extraterrestrials?

Under the sheet, stupid!

The thought hit me then — just as my number was called, and Sherry pushed me out under the glare of the lights. For a moment I stood before the crowd, debating what to do, then summoned my resolution. A vision of Sexy Science flashed before my eyes, and concentrating on it, I *glixed* myself.

Then, flinging my sheet aside, I flashed.

Just for a second I stood revealed to the audience with my green, scaly body, my four arms, six legs, and bulging eyes covered with cockroaches. There I was, complete to the last detail — the bug-eyed monster from the magazine cover.

Then I felt Rick and Steve lifting me from behind and heaving me offstage into the far wings.

"Put me down!" I yelled, as I *glixed* back into human form again. "Hey — where are you taking me?"

"Away. And we'd better hurry!" Sherry was beside me, gesturing towards an exit leading into the outer corridor. As we hastened to the elevator the babble of voices from the auditorium faded.

Rick pressed the button. As the car-doors closed and the elevator ascended, he sighed in relief, then faced me. "You did it again," he said. "And

here I thought we could trust you!"

"I only wanted to win a prize," I told him.

Sherry shook her head. "Obviously you don't know anything about Masquerades," she said. "The judges already had made up their minds — I heard them talking backstage. Third prize goes to the girl with the plunging neckline, second prize to the girl with the bare breasts. And first prize goes to the girl who came out naked. They always win!"

"And you're a loser," Steve muttered. "Unless we protect you. I can just see what will happen if we let you run around loose any longer. Next thing we know you'll be showing up at the Count Dracula Society meeting as a vampire. You'll go to the Burroughs Bibliophile luncheon and turn into a gorilla. And what will we do if you attend the Georgette Heyer tea and decide to turn into Georgette Heyer?"

The elevator halted and the doors slid open.

"Come on," said Rick. "Let's go."

I hesitated. "Where are you taking me?"

"To Suite 16," Sherry said. "You'll be in safe hands there."

They led me to a door at the far end of the hall and Rick knocked.

"What's the password?" demanded a muffled voice from within the room.

"Beem," Rick murmured.

Instantly the door flew open and

there, confronting us, was a tall, kindly-looking gentleman with a smiling face.

"Meet Bob Tucker," said Sherry.

"Bob Tucker?" I gasped. My knees began to tremble. And well they might, for this was indeed a Big Name Fan, a true Secret Master, a veritable Elder God of Fandom. Impulsively, I dropped to my knees and kissed his hand.

Ignoring me graciously, Tucker turned and listened as Sherry whispered in his ear.

"Eight," Tucker nodded. "Leave everything to me."

Sherry beckoned to Rick and Steve. They followed her to the door.

"Where are you going?" I cried.

"Never mind, they'll be back," Tucker said, closing the door behind them. "Now stop worrying. Sherry explained what happened, and I understand. There's nothing to be afraid of — I'll take care of you."

"But I want to see the rest of the Convention," I said. "Saturday night is supposed to be the time for the riots, the smoke-filled rooms —"

"We can have our own riot right here," Tucker assured me, producing a cigar. "And I guarantee to fill this room with smoke in thirty seconds. Now come on — you and I are going to have a little drink."

Turning, he lifted a bottle from the bureau and filled two glasses with fluid colored like darkly-shining brass.

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"That's not beer, is it?" I said. "Beer makes me sick."

Tucker shook his head. "Have no fear, this isn't beer." He handed a glass to me and raised his own. "Drink up," he said. "It's smo-oooo-thly!"

"Smo-oooo-thly!" I echoed.

Tilting the glass to my lips, I drank. Smo-oooo-thly, the liquor gurgled down into my stomach. Smo-oooo-thly the room spun round and round. Smo-oooo-thly my eyes closed and I fell back upon the bed. Smo-oooo-thly I passed out.

When I came to again, it was seven o'clock, Sunday night.

What more can I say? They'd tricked me, all of them, but I understood. It had been done with good intentions, to keep me out of further peril. I bore them no ill-will.

But now, as I opened my eyes and found myself alone in Suite 16, I was seized with a dreadful realization.

The climax of the Worldcon — the Hugo Awards Banquet — was scheduled to start promptly at six p.m. And I was missing it!

Tottering to my feet — none too smo-oooo-thly — I staggered to the door. Nobody barred my way, and the corridor beyond was silent and deserted.

I raced to the elevator, descended to the third floor, and found myself caught up in the crowd pressing its way into the banquet hall. Fortunately, everyone was so intent on entering and my presence passed unnoticed. But from remarks I heard, I gathered the actual banquet meal was ended. Now, as the waiters hasten to pick up the remains of the rubber chicken and took it away for retreads, the non-attendees were being allowed into the hall to hear the speeches and the award ceremonies.

Mingling with the mob, I found a place at the back of the room and

stared past the audience, admiring the distinguished figures on the dais. Some of them I recognized — Joanna Russ, Frank Herbert, A.E. van Vogt, Hal Clement — names to conjure with. As a matter of fact, the entire assemblage was packed with notables; the artists, editors, authors and fans who had created this unique phenomenon of science fiction. I felt a warm glow steal over me as I observed them — almost as warm a glow as I'd gotten from Bob Tucker's smo-oooo-th concoction.

No doubt about it, this was an intoxicating moment.

And when the toastmaster stood up to present the Hugo Awards for the best work in the field for the past year, I found myself listening, spellbound — nodding in accord as he stressed the fact that while only one award was given in each category, all of the nominees were winners.

He began to read off names and hand out the trophies — two-foot high metal figures of space-rockets, gleaming and sharply pointed at the end — I felt a surge of sentiment. Not just for the recipients, but for all those present here; all these wonderful fans and pros who had made this weekend memorable to me. Oh, earthlings are primitive, their ways and ceremonies are childish — but people like these, inspired infants striving to reach the stars — are truly the hope of the future.

All at once I realized that my craving for egoboo had vanished. The petty desire for personal attention was gone, and in its place was an unselfish appreciation of the whole of science fiction fandom. Maybe the so-called serious scientific world mocked their make-believe, but out of their imagination would come the reality which would raise mankind to the limits of outer space. If there was only some way I could express my gratitude —

Too late.

Fran didn't like that and said so.

"You and your husband are in different crews," Wiley said. "Later we'll try to put you on the same shift and give you a chance to carve out your own quarters. For now you'll have to live with the situation."

He kept on calling names until he was done, but he never called mine. I said so. "Commander, you didn't assign me a partner—"

"You are?"

"Shipton."

"I was just getting to you. I want you in my office. The rest of you, get with it. Your partners will show you quarters and get you mess assignments, and aim you at some of the work. Move out, Shipton, this way."

"Sure." I jumped down from my perch. It was a nice feeling as I floated

Something pulsed inside my human skull. A message, telling me my vacation was over. The vroom had groveled down to the hotel roof, arriving right on schedule, and I must join it there to scritch home.

Silently, I slipped away. Quickly, I ascended the elevator to the topmost floor where a skylight led me to the rooftop.

I entered the ship, and we got ready to go into a bit.

No time to thank Sherry and Rick and Steve for what they'd done; no time to thank all the others who'd helped to give me such a marvelous experience. Too late.

Or was it?

As we started to scritch, inspiration seized me. I remembered what the toastmaster had said, about all the nominees deserving Hugos: Why stop there?

Suppose everyone — everyone there at the banquet — got a Hugo for their very own?

That was one way of saying thanks.

Quickly, I went into a gif. Too quickly, perhaps.

For as we swooped down past the hotel, I caught a glimpse of the banquet hall through the windows. Everyone was screaming and jumping to their feet, as if in a standing ovation. But that wasn't the reason.

Apparently, in my haste, I'd made a slight error. I'd gifxed everybody a Hugo under their seat—forgetting that, in English, the words "chair" and "seat" are not necessarily synonymous.

Anyway, I could only hope they got the point.

And as we scritch off I smiled, happy with my memories of the past and hopeful with my expectations of the future. After all, they tell me these Worldcons are annual affairs.

I can hardly wait for next year. . . . ★

BIND YOUR SONS

(Continued from page 43)

would take Fran's smart remark. Moria was legally a US registered ship. Commander Wiley had all the powers of a captain at sea, and then some. In theory we were all part of a semi-military service.

I needn't have worried. Wiley laughed. "Ship's work was planned. Most of it. Here there's no planning, there are just jobs that have to be done."

"Let's get to it. I'm pairing each of you with an old hand. Until further notice you don't go anywhere without your partner. When I call your names come meet your shadows."

He was pairing us up as individuals.

toward the floor, but I'd misjudged how long it would take. I was almost a full minute floating down from my perch, and before I landed everyone was laughing at me. Commander Wiley waited impatiently at the airlock.

OK, I told myself, that's a mistake I don't make again.

His office wasn't much, just a chamber cut in the rock. It had a computer console, and a big solid model of Moria, and some maps. There were iron chairs although there wasn't really any need for them except as a place to anchor yourself.

"Drink?" he asked.

"Thanks."

He opened an iron door in one wall and took out a couple of free-fall bulbs. I caught one. It was beer. "Good stuff," I said.

"We pay attention to the brewing. One of our pleasures in life." He sat behind the desk and motioned me to one of the chairs. "Shipton, you're my only graduate engineer in this batch. My records show you've put in for first available transport back when your contract runs out. That right?"

"Yes."
"Maybe we can make you change your mind."

"Not bloody likely."
He didn't much care for that. "Then why are you here?"

"You know why I'm—"
"No, I mean why did you sign the contract in the first place?"

"A Space Industries contract was the only chance I'd ever have to get to Cal Tech."

He had punched in my name on the console, and now he studied my records. "They caught you pretty young. You could have got out. And with your grades you'd have made it to any of the state universities—"

I laughed at him. "Commander, I'm urban poor and about one half Delaware. There's no way I could flunk out of a state university. And no way I could ever convince anybody I'd learned anything. I graduate and they give me a nice cushy job being visible in equal-opportunity reports. Regular promotions. And they might trust me with management of paper clip supplies."

He nodded. His grey eyes were pointed at me but he wasn't looking at me. "I like that. So now—"

"So now I prove to myself and everybody else that I earn what I get. And I'm going to get a lot."

"Yeah, you'll go back rich all right. OK, Shipton. What do they call you, Bill?"

"No. William. Or Duke." No point in telling him why my classmates had stuck that on me. None of them knew I was aware of their reasons, anyway; and it's not that bad a name.

"We'll try Duke. Look, I haven't got many first class engineers. It's hard to get people to come out here unless you catch 'em early."

"The way they did with me."

"Yeah. Or unless they've got other reasons for coming. The company doesn't look too close at those. We have to take what we can get. People come out here for screwy reasons. The important thing is that they come out to stay."

"And the dude—"

Wiley shrugged. "The rock eliminates most of the ones we don't want."

"Expensive personnel selection method."

"Yeah. But it's effective. Shipton, you're the first top grade engineer I don't have to assign to mining. In fact, you're on paper the best qualified man in this rock."

"That's a little scary," I said.

"It ought to be. It's hard to get expensive people out here, and those that come usually have problems. I'm moving you into the Chief of Staff's office—"

"Ye gods—"

"His office, not his job," Wiley said. "Jason Hoff was a hell of a man, and it'll be a while before anybody fills his boots."

"What happened to him?" I asked.

"He ran out of reaction mass for his suit belt. As near as we can tell he jumped over a mountain. Not a good idea, to jump where you can't see. His trajectory carried him right into the focus of one of the big mirrors. It vaporized him."

I shuddered.

"And he was one damned good man."

I hope it was a lesson to everybody here. Anyway, His job slot's empty. So's his office. I'm moving you in there, but as my aide, not as part of the chain of command. Your job is to study this place. I mean study everything, not just mining and manufacturing where most of our effort has gone, but the rock itself. Living conditions. Recreation. Food production. The whole works. I'll try to keep you off definite assignment. It won't last. There's always fires to piss on, so make good use of your time."

"Maybe somebody more familiar with the place—"

"No." He had a habit of interrupting when he knew what you were going to say. It saved time, but it took getting used to. "My people piss on fires. If we need a pump, they cobble up a pump. It never occurs to them to take a little more time and set up a pump-making operation. Or they go the other way and set up a production assembly for an item we need only one copy of. What I need is an analysis of basics. We don't have much effort to spare, so where's the best place to put what we have? That kind of thing."

"Sure. I'll try it."

"Do more than try." He got up and opened the cabinet again. I hadn't asked for more beer, but he got two out anyway. "Duke, tell me what you know about this place."

"Crab doodle, Commander, I just spent more than a year studying tapes—"

"I don't mean technical. I assume you know as much as you can get from our reports. I'm after what this place means to you."

"A way to get rich. OK, you don't like that. What do you want, the recruiters' pitch? 'Mona is the opening wedge of an enterprise that will liberate mankind from both poverty and pollution. It is a stepping stone to the stars. In time, asteroid mines will—'"

"That will do." He hadn't cared for my mocking tone. "Don't you feel any of that? The recruiters may be corny, but it's all true! Have you ever seen a strip

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mine?"

"Yes—"

"Ugliest thing in the universe! Obscene! What we're doing here means there will never be another of those blasphemies again! You say you're half Indian—"

"Native American. Not that it matters."

"And you of all people ought to appreciate what we're doing here! We're saving the Earth—"

"Look, Commander, let's get something straight. I say I'm half Delaware because that sounds good. The Delawares were respectable people, and I guess I can claim kin to them. But mostly that side of my family were from scruffy tribes that goddamn near starved to death before the white men ever came. That's half of me. The other half is split between German and Scots. Now tell me, if I want to pay honors to my ancestors, do I put on war paint, kilts, or horns on my hat?"

"Now see here—"

"No, you see here. You talk about ending poverty. Crap. I'm ending poverty. My poverty. Whatever that takes, I'll do. But don't talk to me about helping the sons of bitches I grew up with, because I'm not interested. They used to beat the shit out of me every day for fun. I wouldn't give them the sweat—" I got back in control of myself. "Sorry. I've been cooped up in that ship too long."

"You're an interesting man, Shipton. I like the way you calmed yourself down. Maybe you'll do. And maybe we can get you to change your mind about Moria."

"Maybe. It doesn't make much difference. I'm here, and I'll work. I don't slack."

"I believe that. All right, we've wasted enough time. Got work to do—"

"You still haven't assigned me a partner. I'll need one."

"Yes. I'm giving you to O'Grady. Maybe that will remind you to be careful." He pushed a button on the desk console.

The door opened and the man who'd been missing everything came in. He had one leg, the right one; one arm, the left; and one eye, also the left. He looked to be fifty years old, and there were pale patches in the dark tan on his face and the back of his hand. His hair was patchy, steel grey what there was of it. "O'Grady, this is Mister Shipton," Wiley said. "I'm counting on you to see that he doesn't kill himself. He'll have Hoff's quarters."

"Aye aye, Skipper." O'Grady's voice was cheerful. I couldn't help staring at him, and he saw that. He grinned like a thief. "Don't let the horror show throw you, Mister Shipton. I can still get around." He gestured toward the airtight door.

He was right; he had no trouble getting around. He hopped in arcs that didn't take him far off the deck and carried him in long flights down the corridors to land just in front of the airtight doors every fifty meters or so. We went a long way, around turns and down ramps, until I was thoroughly lost. "If this is the Chief of Staff's office and quarters, why is it so far from Commander Wiley's?" I asked.

"Planned that way. We have a blow-out, don't want to lose the whole top layer in one whump, do we?"

I got the picture.

Just in case I hadn't, though, O'Grady chattered on. "Lots of ways to do yourself in. Like me. Got my leg caught in an airtight as it was slamm'n' for a blowout. Got an arm caught in the hammer mill. That one could of happened on Earth, maybe, except it was being off the deck and no way to move that made it happen—"

"It's not so bad as it could be, though," he said. "Look at me. I'm still useful. Get in a full shift's work every shift. Plenty I can do. Here we are."

He opened another airtight door. It was a slab of iron like the others. I fingered the rough surfaces. It stood to reason that there'd be plenty of iron to work with.

The compartment was luxurious. Well, not really. There wasn't much for furniture, and the decor was spartan; but it was big, ten meters by five. It was warm and had plenty of light and there was room to move around in, empty space that wasn't filled with consoles and pumps and elbows—

There was a big tv screen on one wall, and a table with an input console under it. Next to that was a work bench with electronic parts scattered around a soldering iron. The bed was a flat hammock slung up high, three meters off the deck. Why not? The chamber was a good five meters high, and there were shelves and niches carved into the rock walls, not just down low, but all the way to the ceiling.

The stone walls were sprayed with air sealant. Here and there were flat spaces painted black with chalked diagrams on them. For decoration there were plants: pumpkin and squash and two kinds of melons, and a rose bush. The plants grew out of niches cut in the walls, and they poked out at incredible angles. A whole watermelon hung almost horizontal in the air, big fruit supported by the slender vine stalk and nothing else.

"Here's your home," O'Grady said.

Home. It would be that, for quite a while. A lonely one.

II

Our supporters on Earth called us the

cutting edge of technology. We were the first of a series of asteroid mine operations that would eventually liberate Earth forever from shortages of raw materials. The orbital space factories already demonstrated what space manufacturing could do; and with asteroid mines to supply raw materials, the day would come when everyone on Earth could enjoy the benefits of industry without the penalties of industrial pollution.

They fought hard in Congress: more government support for Space Industries, and more importantly, tax writeoffs for the private companies investing in Moria. "Look to the future," they said. "We cannot afford shortsightedness now! Is it not time that mankind looked twenty years and more ahead, instead of always seeing no further than the next election?"

Unfortunately there were more on the other side. "Boondoggle" was the kindest word they had for us. We were, they said, a terrible waste of resources. We absorbed billions that could go to immediate improvements for everyone. Foreign aid; schoolhouses; unemployment; these were the immediate problems, and they would not go away through dumping money into outer space! Who ever heard of Moria? Who could even find it? A rock not even visible through Earth's largest telescopes, a tiny speck hundreds of millions of miles away, where expensive people demanded more and more expensive equipment...

Our friends kept us alive, but they couldn't get us many supply ships; and we were holding on with our fingernails. Commander Wiley hadn't been joking when he said I would be the only unassigned engineer on Moria; I was very nearly the only unassigned person of any description. Even O'Grady worked a full shift when he wasn't shepherding me around. My leisurely study couldn't last.

Commander Wiley knew nothing of scientific management. He was a Navy man, explorer, turned station commander and mining manager. Jason Hoff had done the operations analysis for the station. He had concentrated on the mining and milling, and those were efficiently run. We had three mirrors, the largest nearly two hundred meters in diameter. They concentrated enough sunlight to melt veins of metal out of the rocks. If we wanted ultra-pure materials we could even boil them. Distillation of metals: vaporize them by holding the ores at precisely controlled temperatures, and condense the metal vapor onto cooled plates. It could only be done in space, and it was an impressive operation. It was also dangerous, as Hoff had found too late.

After my first hundred hours I gave up

trying to make much improvement in mining and refining. There was slack in the system, but the improvements would be marginal, and would take a lot of study and operations modeling. Then too, there was a natural limit to efficiency, because there had to be people on stand-by for emergencies. I looked at other departments.

Food production was part of environmental control. We had to grow everything, of course. We could get vitamins from Earth, but you can't feed people across hundreds of millions of kilometers.

Everything grew in hydroponics tanks. The tanks were kept in a series of air-tight glass bubbles, each bubble isolated from the rest so that if one blew out we wouldn't lose everything. They had to be on the surface to catch sunlight. Since Moria receives only 20% as much sunlight as Earth, the bubbles were large, and had mirrors to reflect the light into them. The result was that we got about as much sun on our crops as most places do on Earth—after all, we never had cloudy days. The plants even adapted well to four hour days—but the four hours of dark made temperature control tricky.

Nutrient solutions were pumped through outside heat traps in the daytime, and the heated fluids circulated into the tanks at night. The timing was critical. Plants must be fed at regular intervals, and their roots can't be kept under fluid for very long. The result was a lot of work. With only 312 people on Moria, 40 worked full time, 16 hours on and 8 off, just in food production. Even then there was no time left for experimentation.

The food systems operation was managed by Jesse and Doris Woodridge. They were over seventy, and between them they had more experience in agronomy than the rest of us put together. I was afraid that Jesse might be touchy about a newcomer poking about in his farms, but I needn't have worried. He and his wife were proud of their system, and were glad to show me around.

Plants grew everywhere. Jesse pointed out squashes, breadfruit, barley—"That mostly goes for beer," he said. He gave a quick grin—"corn, wheat, tomatoes, chard, strawberries—"

"You can see they do pretty well without gravity," Jesse said. "Course it makes a problem for the pumps."

The crops grew in bare crushed rock. Nutrients were hand pumped into the gravel beds, then pumped out with vacuum assist because otherwise the fluids wouldn't run fast enough in Moria's low gravity. The nutrient solutions had to be gathered into tanks for re-use. They had to be routed through the heat sinks, then back into the

proper tanks.

The valve system was a maze, and the instruction sheet for the operators looked like an airline schedule: close Valve C-4 at 2240 hours, then pump fifteen strokes on Pump #5; open Valve 73-A at precisely 2244 hours and give seven strokes to Pump #6, then nine more on Pump #5.

I looked at the maze of plastic pipes, valves, and pump handles. It would take 150 hours or more to understand any of it. "Couldn't you automate some of this?" I asked.

Jesse sniffed, then chewed on a stem he'd broken off one of the plants. "Used to chew tobacco," he explained. "Pity we can't grow any here. Miss the stuff." He worked his jaw sideways and swallowed. "Sure we could, Duke. Back on Earth we had seven acres of greenhouses. Full hydroponics operation. Dons and I ran the whole show with three hired hands. Timers to run the pumps, solenoid valves to run the timers—sure we could."

"So why don't you?"

He laughed. "No pump motors. Every electric motor we get ends up in the mine operations. Not enough solenoids for the valves. No timers. But we make do. Doing all right, too." He waved at his tomato crop for emphasis. A hundred plants, most of them covered with fruit. Without gravity to fight the plants grew in a wild tangle, reaching ten meters upward to gather in sunlight. Purple eggplants grew in among the tomatoes.

"You like it here, don't you?" I asked.

Jesse looked for a spittoon, grinned, and swallowed again. "Sure. Back home I'd be tired out every day. Getting too old to do heavy work. No heavy work here. Doc tells us we're going to live to be a hundred, and I feel like I'm thirty again."

I nodded. "Low gravity—"

"Yeah, but it's more'n that, Duke.

Back home, every month or so I'd have to fix up the place again. Kids throwing rocks just to hear the glass break. Replace the glass with plastic and that makes 'em mad, they take an axe to the greenhouses. Tax people comin' around to make sure I didn't improve anything without a permit. Building inspectors tellin' me I'd have to hire a union electrician to do all my wiring over again, when goddamit I knew it was safe, and they knew it was safe, I do better work than any goddam—"

"Yeah," I said. And I'll put up with every bit of it. Just let me get home again. But I didn't say that. "Jesse, if you had the gear to automate some of this, would you still have plenty to do?"

"Sure. We're just keeping things goin' now. No time to play around. I'd like to do some cross-pollination. We got a virus with the last batch of seed.

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Not too bad, but we could develop strains more resistant to it. If we had time. Hungry?"

Before I could answer he bounded across the 25 meter dome, leaped, and jumped toward the top. An orange bush grew out of a small tank hung near the top. Jesse grabbed a handhold and reached out to pick an orange. Then he pushed himself back down. When he landed he handed me the fruit. "Be sure and save the seeds," he said. "That's one of our best ones. And bring back the peel, too. Recycle everything here. Have to."

"Thanks." I looked at the control board again. Three women and two men were working valves and pump handles. They had to anchor themselves to be able to put any effort into pumping. It looked terribly inefficient. "I'll see what I can do for you here."

"Yeah, well, maybe there's others need help more'n we do," he said. "But if you can get us a little more time, I got plenty of slots to put it in."

"I just bet you do."

The whole place was like that. There were dozens of simple improvements we could make, only we couldn't because we couldn't spare anybody to make the tools to make the parts to make the improvements. How do you make labor-saving devices if all your labor is on overtime to begin with?

Eventually I came up with a plan. "What we need is wire," I told Commander Wiley.

"Yeah. I know." He got two beers out of his cupboard. It was his only luxury, and nobody grudged it to him. Wiley worked harder than anyone else, and we never knew when he slept. "They didn't send us much last shipment—"

"We can make it," I told him. "I want to build a wire-drawing mill."

"And what do you use for insulation? Don't mean to belittle your work, Duke, but we've thought of that one—"

"Sure. I did some checking with Flo in organic synthesis. She thinks she can make me some enamel that'll work for motor insulation." I sucked up a slug of beer and laughed. "Of course, first she's got to make starting chemicals. Since everything in her plant is on continuous production runs of stuff we need to stay alive, she'll need new reaction vessels. But the reactions need stirring, so either somebody's got to stand there and twirl the stirrer or we need an electric motor—"

"Only you need insulated wire to make the motor," Wiley said. He wasn't laughing. "Every problem is like that. A ball of snakes."

"That's not all, either," I said. "To make my wire-drawing gadget I need some precision milling. The mill operators right now do about half skilled

work and half stuff anybody could do. I could get milling done by putting some of the farm people to the unskilled work in the mill, except that to get the farmers loose I need solenoids and pump motors to automate the farms to release the labor to do the milling to make the wire-puller to make the wire to make the solenoids—"

I wasn't laughing either. "Do we try it?" I asked.

He thought about it for a moment. "Yes. I like it. There's positive feedback. You get started, and I'll see if I can't pull a couple of people off the refinery. Let's do it."

Fifteen hundred hours later we had wire. We also cobbled up hand-turned coil-winding machines, which were easy because most of the parts could be cast. Pretty soon everyone in the station was carrying around a coil-winder and making motor and solenoid coils during their off-hours. We wound coils while we ate, while we watched TV casts from Earth, during general station-crew assemblies; I think some of the farmers learned to wind coils in their sleep.

There were other things like that, most of them not so dramatic, but I felt we were making some progress. It wasn't enough. We needed more equipment from Earth, and more trained people. We were still figuratively hanging over the edge of a cliff, but now it was by our fingers, not our nails.

My job title didn't change, but as time went on I unofficially had Jason Hoff's job as well as his office. At first the experienced people tended to resent me. Most weren't as pleasant as Jesse Woodridge had been. Jene MacPherson in Air Supply ordered me out of her plant the first time I came there. I could have complained to Wiley, or brought it up in a staff meeting, but I didn't; and after Jesse got through talking about how many improvements I'd helped him make in the farms, she asked me in.

She was about thirty, blonde, a tall thin girl with an inferiority complex because she'd graduated from a state university. She was also fighting the battle of the sexes, and she was damned if some man was going to tell her how to run her air plant.

Airmaking was mostly mining: chunks of ice were cut loose, melted into water, and electrolyzed. We breathed the oxygen and the hydrogen was put into tanks to be used as fuel for ships headed home—when we had a ship ready to go home, which wasn't going to be for a long time. We also used some of the hydrogen and oxygen for chemical power: welding torches, and fuel cells for nine camps on the surface.

It was a little more complicated than

that, because the ice wasn't pure. There was ammonia in it, and other contaminants. The ice chamber was colder than the blue balls of Pluto. I couldn't wait to get out of there.

When we got back to her office and I was warmed up a bit, I asked, "Why do you melt the stuff in there?"

"How the hell else can we pump it to the separators?"

"I thought you might try moving it in solid chunks."

"And what moves those—oh!"

"Oh. Vapor pressure. So we lose some ice. We've still got maybe a hundred million tons. We won't run out. And I think you'll save some manhours. Or people-hours if you like that term better—"

"You don't have to get smart about it." She began punching inputs into her console. "It would take a tunnel through here—"

"I expect I can talk Freeman into loaning us a crew. It shouldn't take long."

"Hmmm. I like it."

"Thanks. While you're in a good mood, can I make another suggestion?"

She laughed. "I didn't know I was that obvious. Sure, what is it?"

"Have dinner with me. In my quarters."

"—You've got more than dinner in mind."

"Probably. So what?"

"I'm a department head. An engineering officer. You don't see any of that. Just a bed partner—"

"Oh, go to hell. Sorry I asked. You're right, I haven't made romantic overtures to Jesse. Woodridge. Or Hank Freeman. I thought you were a woman. It might surprise you to know I've known better engineers than you are who were women."

"That's not fair."

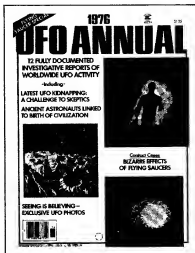
"The devil with being fair—"

"And it's not even true. You must know I have an arrangement with Jim Dorringer—"

"—You and the chief pilot? No. I didn't know. I don't know any of the arrangements here. I haven't time for social life. You were just witness to my first attempt at doing something about that. My apologies." I stormed out. I was angry with myself. Twelve thousand hours in the ship, another 1600 hours on Moria, and I wasn't getting my work done because half the time I was thinking about sex. I decided to go look up the little technician in biochemistry. One of the engineers said she loved to sleep around. That wouldn't help my emotional problems much, but it would sure as hell relieve one difficulty. For a while.

(Continued on page 78)

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The matter didn't end, though. Flo Randall, our chief in organic chemistry, began inviting me to social functions. They weren't much, just drinking parties in the rooms she shared with Roland Hordoy—they were married, but she didn't want any name changes—and there were usually unattached women at the parties. I finally asked Flo why the sudden interest in me.

"Jane says you're lonely," Flo was the universal housemother on Moria. Low gravity had given her an excuse to gain weight until on Earth she'd barely have been able to walk. Here it hardly mattered. They tell me the legend of the jovial fat lady is a myth, but not in 2 centimeters gravity it isn't.

"That's probably true, but this isn't going to solve the problem," I told her.

"Why not?"

"I'm built funny. Thoroughly middle class. I'm looking for family stability. Permanence. It's all in my psych records."

"And you left someone behind?" she asked.

"Yeah. I left someone behind."

"So she wouldn't come out here. You can't blame a woman for that. It's—"

"She'd have come," I said. "I didn't ask her. And I don't know why the hell I'm discussing my personal problems with you—"

"Who else can you discuss them with?" she said absently. She always said that. So had the housemother in the boarding house I'd lived in back in Pasadena. But Flo had lost her smile. "If you're so damned broken up about it, why didn't you ask?"

"It's a long story," I told her. "I'm not sure I understand it myself."

"I suppose it's too late now," Flo said. "You might have brought her, but now—"

"She could get a ticket here anytime she wanted to. Ye gods, MacPherson and you, between you you're going to drive me nuts! Charlie got better grades at Cal Tech than I did. So much better she got a choice of assignments and I had to take Moria."

"Ask her now," Flo said. "Why not? What can you lose?"

"I'll think about it."

I thought about it a lot. The idea was exciting. I couldn't get it out of my head. What could I lose?

Only a silly dream that was getting slier every day. What could Caroline lose? If she wants to come, I told myself, then—well, if when she gets here she's still crazy enough that she wants to live with me forever, why not? We can go back home together. It would be better than living with some fluffy-headed Earth girl who'd never been in orbit.

What can I lose?

After 9000 hours Commander Wiley made it official and named me Chief of Staff. I'd been doing the job anyway, so it didn't change my status much. I still tended to stay out of Roland Hordoy's mining operations except to borrow his people when I had to—and to loan him people out of housekeeping. We'd cut that back to no more than 50% of what it had been when I got to Moria. I was proud of that. The work hadn't been all that brilliant, but it was mine.

That was about all we had to be happy about. The news from Earth was bad.

For me it had been good at first: Caroline was coming out. Her ship had left Earth orbit and was on the way. I found out later that she'd been coming anyway; she was working on ship assembly when I called her.

Twelve thousand hours is a long time to wait, but I thought I could manage it.

That was the good news. Commander Wiley had the bad when her ship had been on the way for 2000 hours. "They tell me that may be the last ship," he said.

We were in his office with the door closed. He didn't often close it. Now I understood why. "We can't live without supplies. Are they sending up transport home?" I asked.

"They're talking about it. They've also ordered me to start a building program. Build our own ships to get home on. Incidentally, can we?"

"I don't know. It's Dorringer's department—can I ask him?"

"Rather you wouldn't," Wiley said.

"I don't think we can do it anyway," I told him. "I'd have to work on it a while, but I suspect they'll have to send up a lot of transport." When personnel ships arrived from Earth we took them apart. The engines were ganged into the big booster we were building to send our mine produce back to Earth. We had precious little portable life-support equipment. "Let me play with it."

I went over to the console and began poking at numbers. It didn't look good. Finally I said, "Scheduling. It takes too many people in housekeeping to keep this place going. If we send any significant number home, we'll have to send all of them. Or it's going to be pure hell for the ones we leave behind—I guess we could do it, but it won't be an easy job."

"I'd rather we couldn't do it at all," Wiley said. He opened the cabinet, but he didn't take out beer. He had a bottle of scotch in there; the last on Moria. Flo had never been able to produce drinkable scotch, and Wiley had had this since he left Earth. He took a pull at the bottle and offered it to me. I shook my head. "Can I trust you, Duke?" he asked. Before I could say anything he

said, "Dumb question. Sorry. But you're still planning on going home. This may be a chance to get home early."

"Yeah." It would cut years off my time. "But—Commander, out here I've been part of something. Something important. I wouldn't want to see it be for nothing. I intend to stay out my contract. You've got a plan. What is it?"

"Not a plan. Just an idea," he chuckled. "You know, our library's pretty complete. Even got law books. Admiralty law."

"Yeah?" Of course we had admiralty law in the computer library. We had to. Commander Wiley was the only law on Moria. As his Chief of Staff I had to sit on trial boards. Fortunately we didn't have much serious crime, and rules infractions could be dealt with in the work schedule.

"Interesting thing, admiralty law. Applies to space if there's not special legislation. Damn it, Duke, why do you want to go back so bad?"

"I own a house in La Cañada. I'm going to live in it."

"Old family home?" Wiley asked.

I laughed. "My brokers bought it 500 hours ago. Took my first year's salary."

"Bought a house you've never seen?"

"I've seen it. Once. When I was twelve years old. This conversation isn't getting anywhere, Commander. Tell me what you need. I'll do it if it can be done."

"And probably if it can't. All right. Duke, I need a study. What do we absolutely have to have from Earth? Bare minimum. And I'd rather you didn't let the department heads know you're making the study. Can do?"

"Won't be easy. There's manpower, too. I assume you mean to pull everyone off mining and refining—"

"No. Certainly not now, anyway. And I'd like to know what effort we can put into M&M even if we go balls-out to be self-supporting. I'm not trying to be mysterious. It's just that I'm not sure of a couple of points. And I know that if any hint of what I've got in mind gets out, it won't work. Trust me?"

I'd have trusted him with my life. Come to think of it, we all did, every day.

"And maybe nothing comes of it," he said. "Or maybe the bloody fools back on Earth will change their minds."

Maybe, I thought.

An Earth year later it was still maybe. Congress gave Space Industries a small tax break and a smaller appropriation for Moria. One more supply ship was sent up, this time with only six people aboard, the rest of the payload supplies from my critical list.

Eight of our people bought it. Commander Wiley read from the appropriate service, and we put up plaques in

(Continued on page 80)

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(Continued from page 78)

the mess hall. The bodies went into the recycling system. We couldn't let go of any organics at all. We tried not to think about that, the way you try not to think that your food on Earth has grown in fields sown with human dead.

We also had our first birth, Debbie Frankmeyer. Her mother was our chief nurse and took a lot of kidding about it. Debbie was one reason we got our supply ship; she was a minor sensation on Earth. There had been children born on the Moon, but never this far away from Manhome. It soon became obvious that Debbie wouldn't be the last child born on Moria.

And Caroline's ship arrived.

I nearly became a nervous wreck waiting for her. I even came up with a good reason to get our scout-ship readied for a prospecting mission that I kept putting off until it was certain that there was nothing wrong with her ship's engines.

"What if she's changed her mind?" I asked. "What—"

"Oh for God's sake shut up," Jane Dorringer said. She watched her husband's scooter cross to where the ship waited a kilometer from Moria. "It's a little late now!"

I couldn't help saying "For you too." I eyed her bulging belly. "So ends the great feminist engineer—"

"I just thought of something," Jane said. "This is that woman you said is a better engineer than I am—"

"Oh Lord. You'll never forget that, will you? What's taking them so long?"

"Don't be an idiot."

It seemed to take hours, but eventually the scooter came back. The airlock cycled. She came through and fell flat on her face.

"I suspect collusion," Caroline said. "Everyone else was paired with a member of the same sex. So how come I drew you? Just where are you taking me, anyway?"

"You'll see," Commander Wiley had finished his lecture to the newcomers and sent them on their way. I led Caroline through the corridor to my room. "Here we are. If you want a place by yourself, you'll have to build it. This is all I've got to offer—"

"The hell it is, Mister," she said. "You've got a house in La Cañada—"

"How the hell did you know that?"

"I heard it was up for sale and tried to buy it. For you. Until I found you'd had your brokers watching it. Bill, it's beautiful! Flowers! Roses! It's magnificent."

Jessie Woodridge's work. He grows things—Charlie, look, this isn't fair. I didn't ask you if you wanted to move in with me."

"You damn fool. Did you think I came a half billion kilometers to sleep alone?"

You could have cut the gloom in the mess hall with a mining laser. We were

all there except for minimum crews at the life support stations. Our people were perched along the walls like bats, each of us in our favorite niche. Even the children were there, all eight of them, from Debbie aged three to our newest, Kevin Hardy-Randall who was getting his dinner from the biggest equipment in space. "Possibly the biggest in the solar system," Flo was fond of saying. "But they tell me there are a couple of women on Earth—"

There wasn't much to joke about. "It's official," Commander Wiley said. "We've been ordered to abandon Moria. There will be no more support from Earth."

Everyone talked at once. "We can't get home without help," Jim Dorringer said. "Not that I'm going."

There were mutters of approval. There were also a lot of worried looks.

"You've known this was coming," Hank Freeman shouted. "So why the hell have you had my crews working the mines? We could have—there are things we could have done. Ways to—Damn it, I'm not leaving! We can live here."

Commander Wiley shook his head. "No. Not without supplies from Earth. Some of our expendables we just can't make here." He looked to me for confirmation. I nodded miserably. "We can almost live, but not quite. Not quite."

"God damn," Jesse Woodridge said. "What happens to Dori and me? Who wants us? God damn."

We all had our memories. Caroline's first baby, premature and dead. Michael Giltivray O'Grady, who'd had one accident too many. And the others. They were part of us, and part of Moria. And for what?

Commander Wiley let the chatter go on for a while. Then he said, "There's a way. It's not something I can order, and it's not something I can put to a vote. But there's a way."

"What?" A hundred people, or more, maybe everyone asked it. "What is it?"

"We can send down one big payload to Earth," Wiley said. "Only one. It can be us, or most of us, if that's what's got to be done. But it could be something else. Twelve thousand tons of copper, iron, silver, and gold. Twelve thousand tons that we can put into Earth orbit from here. If we use every engine we've got and all our fuel."

More chatter. The department heads who were in on Wiley's plan looked smug.

"And it's ours," Commander Wiley said. "The instant they ordered us to abandon Moria this entire station became jetsam. It belongs to the first salvage crew that can get aboard. There's a Swiss firm willing to buy our cargo if we can get it to Earth orbit. They'll pay enough to let us buy our own ship."

And they'd be getting a hell of a deal even so. I could see international lawyers arguing this case for thirty years and more. The United States didn't want us, but they wouldn't want their billions to be lost to the Swiss.

"There's nothing easy about this," Commander Wiley said. "It will be years before we can send our cargo down and bring up new supplies. We'll be on short rations the whole time. And there won't be any new people."

Kevin Hardy-Randall let out a wail. "There's your answer to that," his mother said. "We'll have plenty of new people. Commander, can we really do it?"

"We can."

Epilogue

The children swam across the big rock chamber. In Moria's low gravity they could just manage to fly by flapping their arms. They couldn't go very fast, but it was an exciting game.

They could fly but they couldn't walk. Human bone does not grow thick in low gravity. Children born on the Moon can go home to Earth, but they are never happy there. Children born in the Belt can never go home at all.

None of them seemed to care. Earth was something to watch on television; it wasn't a real place. And anyway, who would want to live where they couldn't fly? Where falls could break bones, and you might drown in water?

The ship waited two kilometers from Moria. It had a huge swollen nose: fuel tanks and twelve thousand tons of pure metals. It had a swollen tail: engines, every space drive on Moria. The cabin between was tiny.

"I'll be all right," the pilot said.

"I'll still worry about you. I wish—it isn't fair, but I wish Jim Dorringer were going instead of you," his wife told him.

"He's needed here. To build the prospecting ship. We've been through it all, Charlie, and I'm the best man for this job. I wish I weren't." He held her close to him for a minute. "But I am. It's not so bad. Four years. Lots of Navy men used to go to sea for longer. I'll miss you." He looked up at the niche thirty meters above them and laughed. "I'll miss the boys, too."

There was nothing more to say, and they didn't waste time on words. She held him again, then they went through the long corridors toward the airlock. He was smiling as he went outside.

It took only minutes for the scooter to reach the waiting ship. The outer airlock door was open, but he did not go inside. Instead he hung there in space next to the ship and looked back at the slowly turning rock. Sunlight glinted from the mirrors at the poles.

You can't buy a home, Bill Jack thought. And you can't buy a dream. But you can build a home, and when you've built it, you know it's yours.

I'll be back.

I'll be back.

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"I walked her to pick up and see a blouse from a place in the corner of the room. She did so. I went and to shake hands with her mother. She rushed to her mother and stroked her hands. 'It will be her to see! She stood still and beat her head. I will be to clap her hands, play a note on the piano, write her name, all of which she did.' 'No one can escape the power of this method,' says Mr. Dubin. 'Everybody—high or low, ignorant or wise—is all subject to its spell! And unless the person is told what's being done, he will think the thoughts are his own!'"

HEARS THE THOUGHTS OF OTHERS! Experimenting further with the Tele-Photo Transmitter, Reese P. Dubin soon found that he could

"tune in" and HEAR the unspoken thoughts of others. He says, "At first, these hearing impressions started me, and I took them for actual speech, until I realized that people don't usually say such things aloud! And their lips remained closed!"

SEES BEYOND WALLS, AND OVER GREAT DISTANCES! Then he discovered he could pick up actual sights, from behind walls and over great distances! And when he "tuned in" he could see actual living scenes before him—as clear as the picture on a television screen!

MAKES WOMAN APPEAR—SEEMINGLY OUT OF THIN AIR! With mounting excitement, Reese P. Dubin launched one of the most exciting experiments in the history of psychic research. He wanted to see if the Tele-Photo Transmitter could bring him an actual material object! He chose, for this experiment, the seemingly impossible: an actual living person!

He simply focused the Tele-Photo Transmitter, by dialing the object of his desire. In a flash the door burst open, and there—standing before him, as real as life—was his long-lost cousin!

He stared and rubbed his eyes, and looked again! There—smiling, with arms outstretched in greeting—stood living proof of the most astounding discovery of the Century!

Dial Any Treasure!

You'll see how to use the Tele-Photo Transmitter, to summon your desires. This special instrument—your mental equipment—requires no wires, and no electricity. "Yes," says Mr. Dubin, "teleport devices, readily from the invisible world!"

When you dial your desire—whether for riches, love, or secret knowledge—you capture its invisible, photogenic form, at which point "it starts to materialize!" says Dr. Dubin.

"Teleutic Power can work amazing miracles in your life," says Mr. Dubin. "With it, it is as simple to dial any desire—called a Photo-Form—then sit back, relax, and watch this powerful secret go to work!"

"Instantly Your Life Is Changed!"

With this secret, the mightiest force in the Universe is at your command! "Simply ask for anything you want," says Mr. Dubin, "whether it be riches, love, fine possessions, power, friends, or secret knowledge!"

Suppose you had dialed Photo-Form #2 for Jewels, for example. That's what Margaret C. did, in an actual example Mr. Dubin tells you about. Rich, glittering diamonds and pearls literally appeared at her feet! a pair of gold earrings, which she found that morning... a surprise gift of a pearl necklace, and matching attire bracelets... a beautiful platinum ring set with emeralds and diamonds, dropped on her front lawn!

"Almost overnight," says Mr. Dubin, "it can start to materially bring you success and love... draw favors, gifts, new friends... or anything else asked for! It isn't necessary for you to understand why. What is important is that it has already worked for many others... men and women in all walks of life... worked every time... and it will work for you, too!"

Brings A Pocket Full Of Money!

You'll see how Jerry D. used this method. He was broke a week before payday. All he did, he wanted to dial Photo-Form #3! Suddenly he felt a bulge in his pocket. Lo and behold! He took out a roll of money... five, tens, twenties... and more! Obviously, it had been placed there—but when? And by whom?

A Brand New Car Comes!

Marty C., a taxi driver, reports that he just dialed Photo-Form #4, sat back, relaxed, and waited for things to happen. In a short time, great excitement filled the house. His wife came hurrying in, saying, "We won it! We won a car and a cash prize! They just delivered it!" He got up and went to the window. There, big and beautiful,



standing in the driveway, was a brand new Cadillac!

Brings Mate Without Asking!

Mrs. Conrad R. reports that she was tired of "pursuing" her husband, as she called it. She wanted him to voluntarily do the things she longed for, take her places, show affection. But he hadn't looked at her in years. He would fall asleep immediately after supper, or watched the ball games, or read the papers. Secretly Mrs. R. decided to try this method. She dialed Photo-Form #9 for Love! Instantly, her husband's attitude changed from boredom to interest and enthusiasm. And from that day forward, he showered her with kindness and affection! It was like a miracle come true!

The Power Of This Method!

There are many personal experiences which I could recount, stories of healing, wealth, and happiness with this secret, that I find myself wanting to tell all of them at once. Here are just a few...

• **REGAINS HAIR GROWTH!** Walter C. had a shiny bald head with just a fringe of white hair showing around the edges. He tried this method, and soon his hair began to regrow. The new hair came in thick, dark, and lustrous!

• **ROLLS DICE 50 TIMES WITHOUT MISSING ONE!** You'll see how this secret gave Albert J. the power to roll the dice 50 times, without missing once, and—for the first time in the history of Las Vegas—walk away with \$300,000!

• **DISSOLVES ALL EVIL!** You'll see how this amazing secret revealed to Lawrence M. the people who were trying to make him look silly at work—actually revealed their secret thoughts—made them confess and apologize!

If TELEUTIC POWER can do all this for others, what riches, what rewards, what amazing results can it also bring to you?

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